

POLAND: NATIONAL AUTONOMY OR SOVIET INVASION?
AN ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC
UPHEAVAL IN POLAND, 1956, 1970, & 1976,
AND PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE

Dallace Leroy Meehan

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THESIS

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by

Dallace Leroy Meehan

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Thesis Advisor:

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This study analyzes developments in post-war Poland, with particular emphasis on the turbulent events of 1956, 1970, and 1976, and develops prospects for Poland's future vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. More specifically, the conclusion evaluates the conditions under which a future Soviet military intervention in the manner of the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia can be expected, as well as how the Poles might establish a very high degree of national autonomy and independence without such an invasion.

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An Analysis of
Political and Economic Upheaval in Poland,
1956, 1970, & 1976, and Prospects for the Future

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

The eruption of violence in Poland since the Second World War has twice resulted in massive changes in the Polish leadership. At least one of those changeovers occurred in the face of Soviet threats to intervene militarily. As recently as 1976, violence again threatened the stability of the Communist Party of Poland, indicating that the dangers of upheaval are still very much present in that strategically important East European state. This study analyzes developments in post-war Poland, with particular emphasis on the turbulent events of 1956, 1970, and 1976, and develops prospects for Poland's future vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. More specifically, the conclusion evaluates the conditions under which a future Soviet military intervention in the manner of the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia can be expected, as well as how the Poles might establish a very high degree of national autonomy and independence without such an invasion.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Three times since World War II, and twice during this decade alone (1970 and 1976) violence has erupted in Poland. Riots in Poznan in 1956 and the subsequent "Polish October" resulted in a massive overhaul of Polish leadership, the most important aspect of which was the emergence of a new Communist party chief, Wladyslaw Gomulka. Gomulka's ascendancy from virtual banishment signaled a period of liberalization and reform that was to but temporarily quell the strains of economics, political pressures, and worker unrest. Fourteen years later the wheel of Polish history turned full circle, and Wladyslaw Gomulka was himself forced to resign as First Secretary following violent riots in several coastal cities. His successor, Edward Gierek, again instituted a degree of political and economic change and managed to steer the new Polish leadership through another period of relative calm and order. This time the lull lasted a scant five-and-a-half years before storm clouds gathered again over Poland. Gierek managed to weather the storm of demonstrations and riots that occurred in 1976, but surely they were manifest evidence of what Victor Zorza, writing recently in the Washington Post, referred to as "Omens in Eastern Europe."¹ But omens, ominous trends, political and social dissent -- even violence and upheaval that result in dramatic changes in party and

¹Victor Zorza, "Omens in Eastern Europe," Washington Post, Jan 26, 1977.

governmental leadership, are in and of themselves but "indicators" of fundamental issues in world power relationships. It is not the rise and fall of the Gomulkas and the Giereks that determines the survival or the destruction of political systems or the physical security of the world. Lurking in the shadows of those indicators however, are more crucial questions that demand examination. With regard to developments in Eastern Europe, those questions revolve around the Soviet Union. For as Ray S. Cline, Executive Director of Studies at the Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies (and former CIA Deputy Director for Intelligence), so aptly states:

"A lot of fashionable nonsense has been written in recent years about the passage of world affairs from an era of bipolarity (U.S.-USSR conflict) to a condition of multipolarity. There is some truth in these assertions, but in many respects they are dangerously wrong. The world is still, to a remarkable extent, divided between a sphere of influence dominated by the USSR...and...by the United States."²

How then are developments in Eastern Europe perceived by Soviet leaders? And how does the Soviet Union react to those developments? The central theme underlying this analysis of the Polish riots will be an examination of those fundamental issues of Soviet perceptions and responses. Conclusions of this analysis will include projections of possible developments in Poland, with particular emphasis on the prospects

²Ray S. Cline, World Power Assessment (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1975), p. 9.

for Poland's course toward national autonomy and independence, and the inherent dangers of a future Soviet military intervention, which would have grave consequences for the stability of central Europe. If intervention should occur, it might have serious repercussions in the Germanies and other European states, and would undoubtedly increase the risk of major war.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF POST-WAR POLAND

An analysis of upheaval in Poland, and especially the Poznan riots of 1956 and the Polish October that followed, must begin with an historical perspective of events leading up to that crisis. A convenient place to begin, especially with regard to Poland vis-a-vis the Soviet Union, is the situation as it existed at the termination of the Second World War.

During the closing phases of the war there had been two Polish provisional governments. In addition to the government in exile in England, there was also a Soviet-sponsored Committee of National Liberation in the Russian-occupied part of Poland. At Russian insistence (and Western acquiescence) the two groups merged to form a "Provisional Government of National Unity." This coalition lasted only until 1947, when the Communists managed to oust all opposition and assumed complete control.³ The installation of this puppet Communist regime in Warsaw represents one of the few really classic operations of the Soviet Union, and therefore deserves some elaboration.

Given the fact that the Poles, perhaps foremost among the Eastern Europeans, were (and are) possessed with intense nationalism and a relatively high degree of homogeneity, it

³Jerome Blum, Rondo Cameron, and Thomas Barnes, The European World (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1970), p. 990.

would seem that they would be the least likely to succumb to Soviet domination.⁴ They were deeply steeped in Roman Catholicism and, had a demonstrated craving for such basic democratic principals as freedom of speech, private ownership, and self-government.⁵

In 1942, Polish Communists in Moscow sent agents to their occupied homeland to form a new Workers' Party, which in the following year, was assigned to Gomulka, a "native" Communist who had remained at home. When the Germans discovered the mass graves of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest,⁶ the Poles accused the Soviets who then broke off diplomatic relations with the provisional government in exile in London. A (mostly Communist) Committee of National Liberation was formed, with headquarters in Lublin. As the Red Army advanced, the Home Army, organized by the London Poles, found itself shunned by the "healthy forces" and was refused aid during the famous Warsaw revolt,⁷ and was subsequently crushed by the then

⁴Edward A. Morrow, writing in the New York Times, Aug 12, 1952 refers to the Poles as "The Irish of the Slav Peoples," with a nationalism as strong as that of the Irish or Yugoslavs.

⁵Richard Staar, The Communist Regimes in Eastern Europe (Stanford: University Press, 1971), pp. 130-132.

⁶"The Katyn Forest Massacre," Hearings Before the Select Committee to Conduct an Investigation of the Facts, Evidence and Circumstances of the Katyn Forest Massacre, 82 Congress, 1st Session, 8 volumes. (Washington: U.S. Govt Printing Office, 1952-1953). Volume 8 contains a very good summary.

⁷Joseph W. Zurawski, Poland: The Captive Satellite (Detroit: Endurance Press, 1962), p. 21. The courageous but futile efforts of the Warsaw Poles, especially the ghetto Jews, is a central theme immortalized in Leon Uris' best-selling novel, Mila-18 (New York: Bantam Books, 1961).

desperate Germans. Following the seizure of the devastated capital by the Red Army, and the expulsion of the German forces, the Lublin government was thus in complete control.

One of the thorniest post-war problems in Polish-Soviet relations was the determination of Poland's boundaries. As early as 1944, Soviet intentions were clearly outlined in an interesting Tass communique in which the Soviets suggested the adjustment of Poland's frontiers westward (at the expense of Germany).⁸ This document left little doubt that the Soviet Union was determined to permanently incorporate eastern areas of Poland into the Ukraine and Western Byelorussia. The issue of Poland's boundaries, and especially the Oder-Neisse line of demarcation between Poland and Germany, would loom large in future inter-bloc relations. Refusal of the future Federal Republic of Germany to accept the Oder-Neisse boundary tended to force Poland into a perpetual state of dependence upon the Soviet Union, as the Bloc's senior member, to ensure stability. (Later, Poland will take initiatives to reach agreement with Western Germany, thus eliminating an important source of dependence on the Soviets.) In all fairness to the Soviet Union however, we should not overlook the fact that she received considerable encouragement and support from the Western powers with regard to her grand design for a buffer Poland. Stalin must have been pleasantly surprised if not actually astounded

⁸"Declaration on Soviet-Polish Relations," Tass (Moscow) Jan 10, 1944, in USSR Information Bulletin, Vol IV, No. 7, 1944, p. 1. Document appears in Alvin Rubinstein, The Foreign Policy of the Soviet Union (New York: Random House, 1960), pp. 190-191.

at Teheran in 1943 when Churchill, on his own initiative, proposed adjusting Poland's borders westward at the expense of Germany.⁹ Churchill's own account of how he demonstrated to Stalin, "... with the help of three matches my idea of Poland moving westward," and that "...this pleased Stalin,"¹⁰ without even the participation of a single Polish representative, is a monument to the perversities of political history. The fate of a nation, over which only a few years earlier nearly the entire world had been drawn into mortal conflict, was now being decided by the manipulation of a few match sticks. Stalin had every reason to be pleased! Indeed, his visions of a dismembered Germany and new Polish frontiers that were well formed as far back as 1941,¹¹ appeared to be on the way to fulfillment.

At Yalta in 1944, Roosevelt and Churchill decided to withdraw recognition of the exiled Polish government in London, thus further ensuring the eventual domination of the Moscow-sponsored Lublin government. On the Party scene, Gomulka, who was chosen by the Communist underground to head the Party in 1942 while Poland was still occupied by the Germans, was replaced by Boleslaw Bierut who returned from the Soviet Union

⁹Winston Churchill, Closing the Ring (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1951), p. 362.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹For a well-documented analysis of Stalin's early attitude concerning his plans for post-war frontiers, see "Stalin and die Oder-Neisse Linie," by Boris Meissner, in Osteuropa, (Stuttgart), No. 1, October 1951, pp. 2-11.

with the Red Army in 1944. At first Beirut headed the new Polish government, but was Stalin's choice to replace Gomulka (who was purged in 1948 when Stalin, in an attempt to circumvent any further Titoist defections, decided to replace East European nativists with more dependable "Muscovites") as Party chief. Henceforth the Sovietization of Poland advanced at a rapid pace and the government and Party quickly assumed the role of a willing instrument of Soviet policy. Early in 1949 Poland joined the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON), which the Soviets had set up as the counterpoise to the European Recovery Plan (Marshall Plan), and later that year, Marshal Konstantin Rokossovsky was assigned as Polish Minister of Defense and Marshal of the Polish Armies.¹² Gomulka was placed under house arrest and later jailed at Stalin's order in 1951, and though released in 1954, remained a virtual prisoner with the label, "nationalist-deviationist."¹³

The "New Course" of Communism following Stalin's death in 1953 and the period of de-Stalinization following Khrushchev's famous secret speech at the Twentieth Party Congress in February, 1956, in which he blazonly denounced the former Vozhd, (supreme leader), are popularly believed to have generated a gradual relaxation in Soviet control of satellite states. The Poles, however, even during Stalin's tyrannical rule managed to demonstrate anti-Soviet sentiment. Following a

¹²New York Times, Nov 7-8, 1949.

¹³New York Times, Dec 19, 1970.

little-known incident that occurred in April, 1951, some 1500 Poles were arrested for participating in riots in Stettin, when a Russian major reportedly shot and killed five Polish citizens during an altercation. Anti-Soviet sentiments were raised to the highest pitch since the war, wiping out all theoretical gains in Soviet-Polish friendship relations. A Soviet board of inquiry composed of senior Russian officers treated the entire incident with a great deal of secrecy, even to the degree that all persons who had been killed, including four Polish policemen, were buried the day following the riots -- without even notification of their next of kin!¹⁴

But for a few years after Stalin's death, at least until Khrushchev's vituperative denunciation referred to above, any measure of relaxation in Soviet policy was confined to internal affairs, with little change in Moscow's relations with the "peoples' democracies." Reports of "fraternal cooperation" between the peoples' democracies and the Soviet Union notwithstanding, ferment in the satellites was to set in almost immediately following Stalin's death.

The first post-Stalin disturbance to occur inside an Eastern state was the strike of June, 1953 in the former Skoda works of Plzen (Pilsen), Czechoslovakia. While currency reform and the subsequent depreciation of wages, savings, and

¹⁴Edward R. Morrow, New York Times (a special report), May 15, 1951. Also cited in Facts on File, Vol XI, No. 550, May 11-17, 1951, p. 153 in a report from Paris.

bonds was the immediate cause, Kremlin leaders must have drawn pause for thought when Czech rioters stepped on pictures of Stalin and Gottwald and violated the Soviet flag. The U.S. flag was hoisted in several places and posters proclaimed, "U.S. Come Back!" and "Robbery is the Russian Paradise."¹⁵

Then only a few days following the Plzen riots, uprisings occurred in the Eastern zone of Germany, which were of even larger dimensions.¹⁶ For the purpose of this analysis the important aspect of the East German riots was the consternation with which the Kremlin leaders reacted to the obvious anti-Soviet sentiments in a peoples' democracy. They found it necessary to accuse the Western press of lying when it reported the anti-government attitudes of East Berliners.¹⁷

The arrest and execution of Beria in December, 1953 was the beginning of extensive purges of secret police throughout the Soviet bloc that lasted into 1955 and 1956. The strong reins of the MGB (now the KGB) over the satellite agencies were considerably loosened, and although Soviet "advisors" were still at their posts in the peoples' democracies, there was no longer a strong hand to direct them from Moscow. In Poland, for example, Bezpieka, the secret police agency established under Stalin, served as both Polish

¹⁵Time, Vol. LXI, No. 25, Jun 22, 1953, p. 33.

¹⁶New York Times, Jun 23, 1953.

¹⁷David J. Dallin, Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin (Philadelphia: Lippincott Co., 1960), pp. 176-177.

security and the means of Soviet control over Poland. The heads of the seventeen departments of Bezpieka were Poles, but all decisions were made by their Russian "assistants" and advisors. The real head of the Polish police was not Radkiewicz, but the Soviet general, Lalin. The following quote from News From Behind the Iron Curtain well illustrates the degree to which the Polish security system was infested with Soviet control:

"In a crowd surrounding Bierut like an unsurmountable wall we can easily distinguish...a Soviet colonel, F. Grzybowski, Director of the Department of Government Officials' Protection, his deputies, Soviet officers, Colonels Debowski, Klaroff, and...Lozovoj. Next to them are several dozen men dressed in dark suits with their hands on the revolvers in their pockets. These are other Russians, Ukrainians, and Byelorussians from Bierut's private bodyguard unit...The Bezpieka constitutes the spearhead of Soviet aggression by means of which Bierut, and through him Moscow, rules Poland." (emphasis added)¹⁸

But without a Stalin or a Beria, the secret police in Poland gradually became more and more responsible and subordinated to the Party leadership. This in turn decreased the direct control of Moscow and increased the potential for factional rivalries within the Party, a phenomenon that would become synonymous with, and to a large degree responsible for, future crises in Poland.

In his scholarly history of Soviet foreign policy, Expansion and Coexistence,¹⁹ Adam Ulam titled one of his

¹⁸News From Behind the Iron Curtain (New York), Vol. 4, No. 3, March 1955, pp. 6 and 22.

¹⁹Adam B. Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence (New York: Praeger, 1968), p. 572.

chapters, "The Perils of Khrushchev." He opens that chapter with the following lines:

"With his historic denunciation of Stalin at the 20th Party Congress in 1956, Nikita Khrushchev opened a new era in Soviet politics...But his career at the top was precarious. It was shaken by events during the fall of 1956, and in the winter of 1956-57 it appeared that he might be superseded."²⁰

Indeed one of the most dangerous of Khrushchev's "perils" would be developments in Poland -- a peril that would outlast Khrushchev to plague his successors as well. For several years Russian leadership throughout the Communist world had been undisputed: Russian ideology was held all-wise and the teaching of Lenin and Stalin infallible; Russian Communism was error-free. Even the culture of satellite states, such as Poland, had been undergoing remodeling after the Soviet pattern: schools and universities taught the social sciences according to Russian interpretation; Russian language was prescribed for youth; foreign affairs assumed bellicose anti-Western attitudes; military and police affairs were controlled by Soviet agents; the economy served Soviet economic needs. But now, Khrushchev had shown the many errors of the late dictator, and disappointment in Russia was felt by large sections of the Communist world. Ulam goes so far as to connect the shock of Khrushchev's great revelation with

²⁰ Ibid.

the heart attack and eventual death of Boleslaw Beirut, who was in attendance at the Congress in Moscow.²¹

Whatever the actual cause however, Bierut's death did create a certain degree of confusion in the Polish Party, and in order to ensure a rapid and amenable (amenable to the Soviet Union, that is) solution to the succession problem, Khrushchev himself flew to Warsaw to supervise the selection of a new first secretary, though ostensibly he was there to attend Bierut's funeral. It was here that Khrushchev allegedly reproached the Polish Central Committee for having "too many Abramoviches around"²² -- an obvious burst of anti-Semitism, but nevertheless sufficient admonition to ensure the election of Edward Ochab, an impeccable Aryan -- but one who would prove incapable of riding herd over the Polish peril, which was to raise its head within just a few months.

²¹There is still a great deal of uncertainty surrounding Bierut's death. Myron Rush, in How Communist States Change Their Rulers (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), pp. 76-77, attributes the death to an illness that began while at the 20th Congress in Moscow. Erwin Weit, Gomulka's personal interpreter, attributes Beirut's death to a suicide. "I was able to learn,,,that Boleslaw Beirut,...did not die of heart failure in Moscow as the official communique stated, but committed suicide after the...Congress...when Khrushchev condemned Stalin and his methods. Bierut...was instructed to go back to Poland and dismantle the now discredited cult of the personality. It was like asking a wolf to turn vegetarian." Ostblock Intern (Hamburg: 1970), p. 37.

²²Ulam, Expansion and Coexistence, p. 578.

Answers to key questions concerning historical events are seldom clear-cut and simplistic. As a matter of fact, depending upon one's vantage point or frame of reference, significantly different answers to specific questions often suggest themselves. To illustrate this point the riots and tumultuous demonstrations in Poland will be examined using a "dual-look" approach. The events of 1956, for example, will be looked at from a more-or-less traditional (Western) frame of reference, and then from a Soviet perspective. When analyzing the events of 1970 and 1976, on the other hand, the first look will concentrate on economic conditions as determinants, whereas the second look will focus on the internal politics of Poland, and whenever evidence permits, on how they were probably perceived in the Soviet Union. In truth, the "correct" answers to questions of causes and responses are usually multi-faceted and complex, and require careful investigation.

III. POZNAN AND THE POLISH OCTOBER

Riots in Poland in 1956 and the subsequent Polish October which resulted in the ascendancy of a new Communist regime under Wladyslaw Gomulka, without direct Soviet military intervention, are largely overshadowed by the explosive events which soon followed in Hungary which did result in ruthless Soviet suppression. But it is precisely because the Polish crisis did not end this way that it warrants critical and careful investigation. Therefore, the crucial question that should drive such an investigation of the 1956 Polish crisis is, why did the Soviet Union choose not to resort to military force in order to impose its will on the Poles?

A. POLAND, 1956: A FIRST LOOK

Khrushchev's campaign of de-Stalinization reached its peak at the Twentieth Congress of the CPSU, in February 1956, particularly in his extraordinary "secret" speech. In an attempt to blame Stalin for the break with Tito, Khrushchev introduced a basic doctrinal shift -- that there can be several roads to Socialism.²³ This undoubtedly added impetus to nationalism and unrest throughout the peoples' democracies and Poland was certainly no exception. The sudden death of Boleslaw Beirut²⁴ soon after Khrushchev's speech, and the necessity for the de-Stalinist rehabilitation of Gomulka, created division

²³Robert V. Daniels, ed., A Documentary History of Communism, Vol. 2 (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), pp. 224-231.

²⁴See fn 21, p. 19.

within the Party and severely complicated Bierut's successor, Edward Ochab's chances of consolidation. Added to this tangled political skein was a downward economic trend, especially in the area of consumer goods and services, caused largely by a Soviet-imposed shift from a pre-war agricultural economy to a post-war industrial-based one. This shift, while beneficial to the USSR, resulted in immense strain on the Polish consumer who in 1956 had to rely upon more expensive imported grains and meat products.²⁵ In a timely piece of journalism that was almost prescient of the June riots which erupted in Poznan, Harry Schwartz of the New York Times (May 21, 1956) in a report titled "Poles Report Lag in Beer and Soap," analyzed previously secret statistics, and concluded that the Polish consumer was indeed fairing poorly.

Barely one month later in protest over more stringent production norms and an unsatisfactory bonus system, Polish workers led by employees of the Zispo Engineering Plant went on strike in Poznan on the 28th of June.²⁶ Streets were blocked by demonstrators, and by 8:00 AM rioting broke out.²⁷

²⁵New York Times, Feb 26, 1956. In a special to the Times titled "Poland on the Rock of Two Revolutions," C.B. Sulzberger (in Warsaw) analyzed economic conditions in Poland, and filed this report the day prior to Khrushchev's secret speech.

²⁶Facts on File, Vol. XVI, No. 818, Jun 27-Jul 3, 1956, p. 217.

²⁷New York Times, June 30, 1956. News coverage of the Poznan riots was especially good, since an international trade fair was being held in that city and Western eyewitness accounts were unusually abundant.

Polish infantry and tank units were rushed into Poznan by early afternoon and while several government buildings were demolished, the revolt was crushed by early morning of 30 June. Warsaw Radio reported that some 48 persons had been killed and another 424 wounded, but Western sources who were in Poznan during the riots estimated casualties at 200-300 dead.²⁸

The most significant result of the Poznan riots was the emergency meeting of the Polish United Workers (Communist) Party's Central Committee in October, which appeared to recognize the stabilizing effect of reinstating Gomulka to his seat in the Politburo as Party chief. Khrushchev and an impressive entourage flew to Warsaw in an apparent attempt to intimidate the Poles, demanding withdrawal of Gomulka's nomination under the threat of armed force. The Poles, under the inspired leadership of Gomulka, stood firm, and in the words of journalist, John Gunther, "Khrushchev receded, and overnight Poland found itself miraculously free of the entire apparatus of Soviet control."²⁹

What then were the primary causes of the 1956 Polish crisis, and more importantly, why was the Polish October allowed to succeed without Soviet military intervention? Based on the foregoing evaluation of the events, it appears that the Poznan riots were a result of economic strain

²⁸Facts on File, No. 818, Jun 27-Jul 3, 1956, p. 217.

²⁹John Gunther, Inside Europe Today (New York: Harper and Row and Brothers, 1961), p. 332.

manifested in worker resentment of conditions. Economic conditions were complicated on one hand by a sense of growing nationalism following the period of de-Stalinization, and on another by the confused state of factionalism within the Party and government following Bierut's untimely death. The subsequent ascendancy of Gomulka and general liberalization in the formation of a new Polish Politburo, while not exactly to Khrushchev's liking, did not warrant Soviet military intervention. The shakeup in leadership, after all, was (according to Adlai Stevenson, U.S. Democratic Presidential candidate) "only a substitute of Communist masters."³⁰ Personal feelings notwithstanding, Gomulka did appear to be the most likely choice of leaders to introduce the necessary measures of authority and stability to effectively quell unrest in Poland, the largest of the peoples' republics and the one with the longest Russian frontier.

B. POLAND, 1956: A SECOND LOOK

Seen through the eyes of the Soviets however, the Poznan riots and the Polish October had much more serious implications. While starting with purely economic demands, the Poznan strikes and riots quickly assumed all the traits of a major political revolt. Within minutes after the Poznan rioters began clamoring for chleba (bread), Polish flags were

³⁰New York Times, Oct 22, 1956, p. 16.

unfurled and the ancient hatred of Pole for Russian surfaced as the demonstration turned into an expression of Polish nationalism. Momentum mounted over the next few hours and posters appeared with purely political slogans such as "We Want Freedom!" "Down With Phony Communism!" and "Down With the Russkies!"³¹ To put teeth into these demands, the crowds then attacked the Communist Party Headquarters building and a foreign-broadcast jamming station -- both obviously political targets.³² Even Khrushchev states in his memoirs that the Poznan riots had distinctly anti-Soviet overtones. He was especially concerned that there was agitation for the removal of Marshal Rokossovsky as Commander in Chief of the Polish Army, attesting to the importance which he placed on Soviet control of Polish forces. Khrushchev became even further alarmed when Wacław Komar was released from prison and put in command of the internal security forces, a move which provided potential para-military support for the replacement of the pro-Soviet Ochab leadership with a new nationalist-oriented one under Gomulka. According to Khrushchev, "In short, it looked to us as though developments in Poland were rushing forward on the crest of a giant anti-Soviet wave.... We were afraid Poland might break away from us at any moment."³³

³¹Dallin, Soviet Foreign Policy After Stalin, p. 339

³²New York Times, Jun 30, 1956.

³³Nikita Khrushchev, Khrushchev Remembers: The Last Testament (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1974), pp. 198-200.

Despite Soviet emphasis on Party unity, Poznan had created a top-level split in the country between a Stalinist faction, known by their meeting place as Natolinites," and a revisionist faction of social democrats and evolutionary communists who stressed gradual changes in Poland in the direction of institutional reform.³⁴ Ochab, though originally a Stalinist, attempted to straddle the two factions, but soon lost all necessary influence as Party leader. In Khrushchev's own words, "He was a beaten man."³⁵

Pressures within the Polish leadership mounted for reform and it became increasingly clear that only Gomulka could serve as the necessary symbol of Polish unity and national independence,³⁶ a situation that was totally unpalatable to the Kremlin.

The Polish Eighth Plenum met on October 19, and Gomulka was reinstated as a Central Committee member. Ochab left little doubt as to the direction the Plenum was to take when he announced Gomulka's candidacy for First Secretary of the Party. The meeting was abruptly suspended, however, when news came of Khrushchev's unannounced arrival in Warsaw at the head of a platoon of Soviet Party chieftans, including Deputy Premiers Molotov, Mikoyan, and Kaganovich, Warsaw Pact Commander, Marshal Konev, and Defense Minister Marshal Zhukov.³⁷

³⁴Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), pp. 249-251.

³⁵Khrushchev Remembers, p. 201.

³⁶New York Times, Oct 9, 1956.

³⁷New York Times, Oct 21, 1956.

It is clear that the purpose of such an impressive array of clout was to intimidate the Poles into acceptance of Soviet demands. Khrushchev presented the Poles with an ultimatum demanding retention of the old Politburo (meaning retention of Ochab and Rokossovsky but not Gomulka) and a slow-down in Poland's tendency toward bourgeois nationalism. Khrushchev reportedly threatened military intervention by two Soviet divisions that were moving toward Warsaw. At the same time, Soviet military units stationed in East Germany began moving eastward.³⁸ Polish tenacity and stubbornness must have amazed the Soviet heavyweights. Even Ochab, Khrushchev's "beaten man," upon learning of the movement of Soviet troops reportedly told Khrushchev, "...if you do not stop them immediately, we will walk out of here and break off all contact...Don't think you can keep us here and start a putsch outside....The Party and our workers have been warned and they are ready."³⁹ Later, Khrushchev recounted Gomulka's reaction to the word that Konev had moved Soviet troops closer to Warsaw. "He came to me and said, 'Comrade Khrushchev, I've just received a report that some of your forces are moving toward Warsaw. I ask -- I demand -- that you order them to stop and return to their bases. If you don't, something terrible and irreversible will happen."⁴⁰

³⁸ Facts on File, Vol. XVI, No. 834, OCT 17-23, 1956, p. 345.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Khrushchev Remembers, pp. 203-204.

By the following morning, 20 October, the Soviets accepted a proposed list of Polish Politburo members with Gomulka as First Secretary. That afternoon, in an address to the Polish Communist Party Central Committee, the new First Secretary, Wladyslaw Gomulka, stated that "Every country has the right to be independent and sovereign....The most powerful trend sweeping the country is the call for democratization of our life."⁴¹

This was truly an unprecedented situation for the Soviet leadership. The success of the Polish October represented perhaps the greatest crack in the Communist monolith since the Yugoslav defection of 1948.

The cause of the Poznan riots is not quite as simplistic as the previous analysis (a first look) would suggest. Here we see that while economic problems and worker dissatisfaction may have been the spark which set off the demonstrations and riots, there could have been little doubt in the minds of the Soviet leadership that the underlying cause was the deep-seated, anti-Soviet sentiment on the part of the Poles which was allowed to surface because of the liberalization throughout the Communist world associated with Khrushchev's de-Stalinization measures. To this was added the growing feeling of Polish nationalism. The confrontation between the Russians and the Poles and the subsequent success of the Polish October, especially the ascendancy of Gomulka and the expulsion of Rokossovsky, represented a serious challenge to Soviet hegemony

⁴¹Daniels, Documentary History of Communism, pp. 235-240.

in Poland -- a challenge that might indeed spread to other East European nations. George Kennan went so far as to say that the Polish October underscored "an extensive disintegration of Moscow's authority within the Soviet sphere."⁴²

Milovan Djilas, in an article for which he was sentenced by a Yugoslav court to a three-year prison term, referred to the Polish October as the "triumph of national Communism."⁴³

Viewed from a Soviet perspective, the question of why the Soviets chose not to intervene militarily looms even larger than it did in the earlier analysis. Nor in view of this Soviet perspective can we accept the proposition (attributed earlier to Adlai Stevenson) that Gomulka merely represented a change in Communist masters. In attempting to answer whether it might not have been better for the Soviet Union to intervene by force of arms in order to preserve their undisputed hegemony, Zbigniew Brzezinski poses a set of factors which together translate into Soviet indecision and a policy of "wait-and-see." He attributes Soviet non-intervention to the danger of undermining relations with Tito, Chinese recommendation of patience, and fear of giving credibility to those elements within the Soviet leadership which were in opposition to the de-Stalinization campaign.⁴⁴ These all were undoubtedly contributing factors. The Chinese, for

⁴²New York Times, Oct 21, 1956, p. IV-1.

⁴³Milovan Djilas, "The Storm in Eastern Europe," in Readings in Russian Foreign Policy, ed. R. A. Goldwin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), pp. 630-637.

⁴⁴Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc, pp. 260-261.

example, were indeed supporting the Poles in their bid for an independent path to Communism as early as 15 October, when Mao Tse-tung indicated his disapproval of the Soviet effort to re-establish a single road.⁴⁵ Chou En-lai flew to Moscow, then to Warsaw, to act as moderator and to urge Soviet restraint.⁴⁶ But further analysis from a Soviet perspective suggests that the central issue was the obvious threat -- indeed, demonstrable proof! -- that the Poles would fight. A New York Times press account of the stormy encounter between the Poles and the Russians that occurred at the 19 October Central Committee meeting, credits Khrushchev with the following comment. "I will show you what the way to Socialism looks like. If you don't obey, we will crush you. We are going to use force to kill all sorts of risings in this country."⁴⁷ This is altogether believable, and certainly in keeping with Khrushchev's diplomatic approach to international relations. The threat was given believability by the presence of Molotov and Kaganovich in the Soviet delegation, known "hard-liners." And, the presence of Marshals Konev and Zhukov indicated more than just a passing interest in the Polish proceedings on the part of the Soviet military.

⁴⁵Edward Crankshaw, The New Cold War: Moscow vs. Peking (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1963), p. 53.

⁴⁶Ibid.

⁴⁷New York Times, Oct 21, 1956, p. IV-1.

Indeed, Zhukov, according to U.S. Ambassador C. E. Bohlen, urged military action in Poland but was probably overruled.⁴⁸

But the Poles stood firm. Gomulka countered Khrushchev's moves by mobilizing the Polish internal security forces under the recent command of General Komar, arming factory workers in Warsaw, and winning the allegiance of many units of the Polish army.⁴⁹ Perhaps the best indication of Soviet perception of the situation can be gleaned from Khrushchev's own words:

"Marshal Konev and I held separate consultations with Comrade Rokossovsky, who was more obedient to us but had less authority than the other Polish leaders. He told us that anti-Soviet, nationalistic, and reactionary forces were growing in strength, and that if it were necessary to arrest the growth of these counterrevolutionary elements by force of arms, he was at our disposal; we could rely on him to do whatever was necessary to preserve Poland's socialist gains and to assure Poland's continuing fidelity and friendship. That was all very well and good, but as we began to analyze the problem in more detail and calculate which Polish regiments we could count on to obey Rokossovsky, the situation began to look somewhat bleak. Of course, our armed strength far exceeded that of Poland, but we didn't want to resort to the use of our own troops if at all avoidable.⁵⁰ (Emphasis added)

That the Soviets tested the resolve of the Poles to fight can hardly be doubted. Russian troops based in East Germany for example, massed on the Polish frontier on 19 October and asked permission to cross into Szczecin (Stettin). When refused by

⁴⁸Charles E. Bohlen, Witness to History, 1929-1969 (New York: W.W. Norton, 1973), p. 409. Recounting the Polish October, Zhukov told Bohlen, "...there had been more than enough Soviet troops...to force settlement on Kremlin terms. (We) could have crushed them like flies."

⁴⁹Stefan Korbonski, Warsaw in Chains (New York: Macmillan Co., 1959), p. 304. Korbonski reports that Stefan Staszewski, secretary of the Warsaw PZPR Committee, had 60,000 workers armed and ready to resist any attack on Warsaw by Russian troops. Additionally, he reports that there were several thousand youths prepared to mobilize against the Russians.

⁵⁰Khrushchev Remembers, p. 203.

Polish border units, they attempted to cross anyway, but were promptly fired upon by Polish units and withdrew.⁵¹ It is highly unlikely that the Russian troops were acting on their own initiative. More probably they had received orders to proceed into Poland only if they met no armed resistance.

Military intervention is by no means an automatic Soviet response to the takeover of an Eastern European Communist Party by a domestic faction, or to the transition from Soviet satellite to a national Communism. The Yugoslavs succeeded in 1948, Albania in 1961, and the Romanians (to a large degree), in the mid-1960s. Khrushchev's intervention in Hungary in 1956 was not directed at a domestic faction of the Hungarian Communist Party attempting to take over from Muscovites -- but at putting down an uprising against all elements of the Hungarian single-party dictatorship. Gomulka and the Poles, on the other hand, did not threaten to break from the Communist fold. On the contrary, the Poles were able to reasonably assure the Soviets that they would continue to operate within acceptable limits of socialist Communism. Furthermore, by threatening to resist military intervention, the Poles confronted the Soviets with the necessity of killing Eastern Europeans -- soldiers, civilians, and Communist Party members alike.

⁵¹Otto P. Chaney, Jr., *Zhukov* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1971), p. 376. See also the *New York Times*, Oct 21, 1956, which carried the front page headline, "Poles Report Firing on Russian Red Army to Prevent its Entry From East Germany."

The answer then, to why the Soviets did not resort to military intervention in Poland in 1956, is that in Soviet eyes (at least in the eyes of those whose judgment prevailed), the risks were too high to be justified by expected payoffs.

IV. THE AFTERMATH OF THE POLISH OCTOBER

The rise to power of Gomulka followed by several important Soviet concessions to the Poles highlighted the Polish October as an overwhelmingly successful bid for a significant measure of national autonomy. Soviet officers and advisors were quickly removed from positions in the Polish armed forces and Party administration. Cardinal Wyszynski was released from prison and a new agreement was negotiated between the Church and State. Negotiations were opened in Moscow between the Poles and Russians which, in November 1956, resulted in the recognition of Poland's "full sovereignty and independence."⁵² Among other concessions won by Poland was the cancellation of a 2.4-billion ruble debt owed to the Soviet Union (against coal deliveries made since 1945), credit to buy 1.4-million tons of grain, and 700-million rubles in credit for other commodities. And while it was agreed that Soviet forces would "temporarily" remain in Poland (to guard against the threat of German aggression against Poland's Oder-Neisse frontier), Poland was assured that Soviet troops would not interfere in Poland's internal affairs and would be subject to Polish law.⁵³ Gomulka was given a well-deserved hero's welcome upon his return to Warsaw, but world attention was diverted from the Russo-Polish situation by the explosive events in Hungary.

⁵²New York Times, Nov 19, 1956.

⁵³Facts on File, Vol XVI, No. 838, Nov 14 - Nov 20, 1956, pp. 388-389. (A copy of the "Polish-Soviet Agreement on the Status of Soviet Troops Temporarily in Poland" is included as Appendix A.)

The apparent thaw following the Polish October, however, was marred by several chilling events which indicated that, from a Soviet viewpoint, the relationship with the Poles was an uneasy one. Within three days after Gomulka's return from Moscow for example, Poland, for the first time ever, failed to vote with the Soviet Union on a United Nations resolution.⁵⁴ Even more disquieting, however, were Polish demonstrations that occurred in Warsaw in sympathy for the plight of the Hungarians. For some two hours on the evening of 24 October, thousands of youths marched around the center of Warsaw shouting anti-Soviet slogans and calling for Rokossovsky's recall to Moscow. Even a traditionally forbidden subject surfaced as demonstrators rhythmically chanted, "Katyn -- Katyn -- Katyn!" recalling the massacre of from 10,000 to 12,000 Polish army officers by the Soviets during World War II.⁵⁵ Then on the following day, crowds of Poles attacked a Soviet army installation at Liegnitz and had to be repelled by Polish militia units with tear gas.⁵⁶ A few weeks later (December 10, 1956) an apparently isolated event, the arrest of a drunken man in Stettlin and subsequent complaints

⁵⁴New York Times, Nov 22, 1956. This UN resolution was to allow observers to determine conditions in Hungary following the Soviet invasion. The asst to the Sec. General, when reading the roll call, after "Poland," said "No!" -- apparently automatically. The Polish delegation waved their hands excitedly with apparent delight, insisting their vote was "abstention."

⁵⁵New York Times, Oct 24, 1956.

⁵⁶Current History, Vol. 31, No. 184, Dec 1956, pp. 376-377.

by the man's friends, led to the outbreak of still another little-publicized riot that again soon developed into an expression of anti-Soviet sentiment. The Soviet consulate was raided by a mob. Windows were smashed and attempts were made to break in before Polish police managed to quell the disturbance and disperse the crowds.⁵⁷ Later it was learned that many of the rioters actually did enter the consulate wrecking the interior, threatening employees, and looting its contents. The Polish government, of course, officially apologized to the Soviet Union.⁵⁸ The year 1956, not exactly a great year for Soviet-East European relations, came to a close with a blazing verbal attack in Pravda against parties who placed nationalism above unity with the Communist world, and a warning to the Poles not to raise nationalist goals too high, reminding them of Lenin's attack on "narrow-minded nationalism" and "nationalistic distortions."⁵⁹

Nevertheless, Poland under the leadership of Gomulka appeared to be well on its way to a fairly independent path toward Socialism. In addition to the concessions won from the Soviets, within Poland itself the rule of terror was largely curbed, persecution of the Catholic Church ended, and collectivization of agriculture was abandoned. But while these reforms were welcome, they proved to be less than

⁵⁷ New York Times, Dec 12, 1956.

⁵⁸ New York Times, Dec 13, 1956.

⁵⁹ New York Times, Dec 24, 1956.

enough, and in the long run, they fell far short of popular expectations.⁶⁰ Heavy restrictions were gradually re-imposed on intellectual freedom; anticipated economic reforms were not carried out; and in the area of foreign affairs, Poland once again fell in step with the Soviet Union. Erwin Weit, Gomulka's personal interpreter for many years, says that "...the tragedy of Gomulka was that once he had gained power and had made the initial changes from the hated system of the past, he began to back-pedal."⁶¹ Milovan Djilas had this to say about Gomulka:

"Poland and the whole world changed, but Gomulka did not. His modesty and conciliatoriness, partymindedness and patriotism were transformed into obstinancy and a peremptory manner, into bureaucratism and pedantry. There are few historical figures who began so courageously and ended so disgracefully. Gomulka has no complaint that history did not give him a chance."⁶²

Gomulka, in short, disappointed the hopes of his most steadfast supporters and became isolated from the sentiments of the Polish people. Throughout the 1960s this disillusionment turned more and more frequently into defiance and on several occasions erupted into the open.

Gomulka's leadership was challenged by two factions within the Party itself. One was led by Edward Gierek, the

⁶⁰Adam Bromke, "Beyond the Gomulka Era," Foreign Affairs, April, 1971.

⁶¹Erwin Weit, At the Red Summit: Interpreter Behind the Iron Curtain (New York: MacMillan, 1970), pp. 4-5.

⁶²Milovan Djilas, in Kultura (Paris) No. 3, 1971. Translation in A. Ross Johnson's "Polish Perspectives, Past and Present," Problems of Communism, Vol. XX, Jul-Aug 1971.

influential first secretary of the industrially powerful Katowice Province, and the other, known as the Partisans," was led by former Gomulka supporter, General Mieczyslaw Moczar, who as Minister of Internal Affairs, controlled the system of state security.⁶³ Ultimately, it would be a coalition of these groups that would fill the vacuum left by Gomulka's departure in 1970.

The year 1968 marked something of a turning point in Polish politics, and clearly signalled the beginning of the end for Gomulka. In February and March, dissatisfaction burst into the open once again as thousands of Warsaw students took to the streets to participate in sit-in strikes and demonstrations in protest over cultural censorship.⁶⁴ Although Gomulka survived the crisis and was re-elected First Secretary in November, internal Party conflict was further intensified against a backdrop of intellectual repression, anti-semitism, economic sluggishness, and a general feeling of despair and depression.⁶⁵ The events of 1970 might not have been necessary to bring Gomulka's house of cards tumbling, had it not been for the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia.

⁶³Bromke, "Beyond the Gomulka Era," p. 401.

⁶⁴For an excellent journalistic description of the spring riots in Poland, see, in order, Stephen Rosenfeld, "Polish Writers Attack Regime's Cultural Policy," Washington Post, Mar 2, 1968; Jonathon Randal, "Polish Students in Second Day of Riots," and "Thousands in Poland Fight Police as Protest Mounts," New York Times, Mar 10 and Mar 12, 1968.

⁶⁵Jonathon Randal, "Power Struggle Persists Among Polish Communists," New York Times, Oct 31, 1968.

Gomulka had been defending his position on the grounds that he had to walk a thin line between national liberalism and international subservience to the Soviet Union. Poland's geographical position, sandwiched between the Soviet Union and Germany, forced him to retain Moscow's favor in order to avoid a deal between his two neighbors at Poland's expense, specifically the restoration of that area of Western Poland that was once Germany.⁶⁶ Even as early as 1957, while still at the height of his political strength and domestic popularity, Gomulka indicated his awareness of the need for caution with regard to the Soviet Union, and even then he warned that "to cross out Communist candidates (in the coming election) is to cross out Poland from the map of European states."⁶⁷ Then in 1968, in a speech delivered at a shipbuilders' festival in Gdansk (which appeared in Pravda only two days later), he gave ample notice that he fully supported the "solidarity and fraternal cooperation with our mighty neighbor the Soviet Union...on the basis of internationalism..."⁶⁸ Certainly by 1968 his position was extremely precarious. In an ex post facto admission of his own:

"If there had been no intervention in Czechoslovakia I would have lost the last vestiges of power and authority

⁶⁶Erwin Weit, Red Summit, p. 5.

⁶⁷Current History, Vol. 32, No. 187, Mar 1957, p. 189.

⁶⁸Wladyslaw Gomulka, "The Rout of the Counterrevolution," speech in Gdansk, Jun 28, 1958, Pravda, Jun 30, 1958, translation in Current Digest of Soviet Press, Vol. X, No. 26.

in Poland. The situation was so tense that I literally counted the days....If the Soviet comrades decided to solve this problem another way, people would conclude that Gomulka's opinion no longer carried any weight. And this really was a period when my position was by no means stable."⁶⁹

The Soviet rape of Czechoslovakia was to grant Gomulka only a temporary lease on his political life.

⁶⁹"The Reminiscences of Wladyslaw Gomulka," Radio Liberty Research, No. 50, 1974, p. 15.

V. GDANSK AND THE FALL OF GOMULKA

A. POLAND, 1970: A FIRST LOOK

One of the greatest problems confronting the Gomulka regime during 1970 was the continued deterioration of Poland's economic situation. Two consecutive poor crop years resulted in a substantial decline in farm production, including a fall in grain harvest by four million tons, and a reduction in the pig population by 14 percent. And, due to under-investment in agriculture and a shortage of fertilizer, Poland had to import millions of tons of grain from the Soviet Union, France, West Germany, and Canada. Agricultural exports, which largely financed the modernization of and investment in industry, had to be drastically cut.⁷⁰ In the face of these problems, the regime proved incapable of effective economic management. This is not surprising -- nor can all of the blame be charged to Gomulka. Innovative economic management of the type needed by Poland in 1970, is not the forte of a centrally controlled Communist regime bound by ideological conservatism. As Peter Drucker, one of the world's leading authorities on management, points out, because of the absence of a realistic pluralism of competing institutions, "...such a regime does produce goods and

⁷⁰The Annual Register (London: Longman, 1971), p. 118.

services, though only fitfully, wastefully, at a low level, and at an enormous cost in suffering, humiliation, and frustration."⁷¹

By the early part of 1970, industrial workers began to add their voices to the mounting dissatisfaction with the worsening economic situation, and severe food shortages led to minor disturbances in southern Poland. It must be pointed out that while it is one thing for a Communist regime to neutralize or even suppress intellectual, religious, or student dissent, it is quite another to cope with serious worker unrest. Demonstrations, strikes and violence of workers directed at a Party claiming to have the workers' interests at heart, represents a threat to the very foundation of that Party's authority and legitimacy. (The moral pronouncements and ideological charges of Solzhenitsyn, the writer, for example, do not carry quite the same impact as the burning and pillaging of Smygelski, the dockworker.)

⁷¹Peter F. Drucker, Management (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), p. x. Even the Poles recognized the economic stagnation that plagued the Gomulka regime of 1970. K. T. Toeplitz, a Polish commentator writing in Zycie Warszawy, Jul 22, 1970, made the following observation: "...the amount of energy expended on and, even worse, the hopes attached to organizations are small. Why? I think it is because their activities have been largely formalized, subjected to a single model, and hence somehow bureaucratized. As a result, many organizations have lost their character as initiative groups, as characteristically socialist 'pressure groups' seeking the realization of their demands...It often seems that many of the conduits...are blocked, buried under a mountain of paper, devoid of independence or effectiveness."

Then in December, the government committed a monumental blunder by adding the proverbial last straw. In order to avoid losing foreign exchange by diverting meat production intended to export to domestic consumption, the decision was made to curtail demand by increasing prices. The increases were from 11% to 33% for meat and meat products, 8% to 25% for cheese, flour, fish, and milk, and 92% for wheat (ersatz) coffee, constituting over 70% of an average family budget.⁷² To make matters worse, the increases were to go into effect only days before Christmas in a traditionally religious nation where the birth of Jesus is celebrated with gluttonous enthusiasm, in which even the poorest family sits down to a nine-course "Vigil Dinner" on Christmas Eve.

The announcement came on 13 December, only one day after shipyard workers in Gdansk were demanding revision of a new wage incentive system which was to take effect in 1971, believed to be aimed at a reduction in take-home pay. On 14 December, the day following the price increase announcement, the Gdansk workers laid down their tools and took to the streets. Polish militia intervened and the demonstration appeared to be quickly broken. Early the next morning (15 December) however, the workers were joined by students and housewives, and this time when the militia intervened, the demonstrations escalated into pitched battles during which several public buildings, notably the Party headquarters,

⁷²Facts on File, Vol. XXX, No. 1573, Dec 17 - Dec 23, 1970, p. 929.

were set on fire. During the next two days, rioting spread to neighboring towns of Sopot, Slupsk, Gdynia, Elblay and Szczecin. Violence in Szczecin reached such a point that the city Strike Committee was in fact running the city for a few days. Regular military tank and armor units intervened on 18 December, and troops occupied key points sealing off the entire coastal area. Foreign eye-witnesses arriving in Sweden and Denmark reported bloody clashes between civilians and troops, and told of hundreds of casualties. Polish radio broadcasts monitored in West Germany carried news of the clashes as early as the evening of 15 December, and largely confirmed eye-witness reports.

Then on 19 December, Radio Warsaw reported a state of calm and order returning with only partial strikes continuing, and on 20 December, only days after the outbreak began, the New York Times carried the headlines, "Gomulka Quits in Wake of Poland's Price Riots; Gierek New Party Chief," A few days later the Polish Sejm (parliament) accepted the resignation of Premier Jozef Cyrankiewicz, and ordered food prices frozen for two years (except for seasonal fluctuations). That same session ratified several other governmental appointments in an apparently honest attempt to revitalize the nation's economy.⁷³ Edward Gierek, the new Party chief, took immediate steps to appease the workers by pledging to partially restore

⁷³This account of the 1970 food price riots in Poland has been pieced together from reports that appeared in the New York Times, Dec 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, & 21, 1970; the London Times, Dec 17, 18, 19, 20, & 21, 1970; Facts on File, Vol XXX, No. 1573, Dec 17-23, 1970, pp. 929-930; and The Annual Register, 1970 (London: Longman, 1971), pp. 113-121.

the earning power of lower income groups and abandoning the proposed wage system. Despite these concessions and changes in leadership, however, worker unrest continued through January 1971, when additional work stoppages took place, and early in February some 10,000 textile workers went on strike. Gierek was bailed out by the Soviet Union however, who granted the considerable credit of some 100-million dollars -- enough to enable him to revoke the increases that had sparked the December riots, and on the following day, the strikers returned to their jobs. By the middle of 1971, the internal crisis had largely passed and the Polish economy was on the way to recovery.

The events as unfolded above suggest clearly that the cause of Gomulka's demise as party leader was his regime's inability to cope with the serious economic straits that confronted Poland in 1970. Economic reform was indeed necessary for the Polish economy to work, and price increases were an inevitable aspect of that reform. But the increases in consumer staples were too drastic to be acceptable to the Polish worker, and the timing of those increases could not have been worse.

The answer to the question, why did the Soviet Union choose to show so much restraint during the 1970 crisis, is a bit more difficult. It is known that Gomulka had backed his way into a "neo-Muscovite" position and became a faithful follower of policies established by the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Why then didn't his powerful

sponsor step in to lend support during his hour of need? A cursory analysis might suggest the following. First, the Poles acted quickly to solve their own internal crisis, and it was only a matter of days from the onset of the riots to Gierek's emergence as First Secretary -- a move that appeared acceptable to all factions in the PUWP leadership. Second, the Soviets were undoubtedly aware of Polish economic problems, and Gierek was a logical choice to deal with them. He had built up a reputation in Silesia, (Poland's most industrialized province) not as a "reformer" but as a capable, pragmatic manager cut from the mold of the modern technocrat.⁷⁴ And finally, it should not be overlooked that Gomulka reportedly suffered a nervous collapse on the first or second day of the riots. Gomulka did in fact issue an appeal for help to Brezhnev (the contents of which is not known) but only after he was hospitalized or confined to house rest.⁷⁵ Thus, whether Gomulka's illness was of the physical or the political variety, Soviet intervention would have been in support of a "sick" client.

B. POLAND, 1970: A SECOND LOOK

Just as in 1956, if the events of 1970 which led to Gomulka's downfall are analyzed from a Soviet perspective, they begin once again to reflect the tangled skein of Polish, indeed, Communist politics.

⁷⁴David Bonavia, special to the London Times, Dec 22, 1970.

⁷⁵Leopold Labedz, "From Poznan to Gdansk," Interplay, Vol. 4, No. 3, Mar 1971, pp. 21-26.

The economic conditions in Poland discussed above were undoubtedly known to the Soviets and probably accepted as the immediate cause of the December riots. The Soviets are well attuned to the problems of economics which beset virtually all Communist nations. They were in fact contemplating their own price increases to alleviate some of their own economic woes. According to Dimitri Simes, Director of Soviet Policy Studies at Georgetown University, Soviet grocery stores had already received new price lists when the whole plan was cancelled as a result of the Polish example.⁷⁶

There are a few aspects however, that might have been perceived differently in Moscow. The most serious of these was that the timing of the announced price increases appeared to be more than a mere blunder, -- indeed, bordered on the brink of an outright provocation. This was speculated by one Communist source as early as 17 December 1970.⁷⁷ Therefore even though the price rises may have been the final straw, the much more basic cause of the crisis in Poland which brought Gomulka down, was a factional struggle in the Polish Politburo. This struggle had been going on since the aftermath of the 1956 Poznan riots, and had crescendoed by 1968 as described earlier.

It is significant that the leaders of the two factions opposed to Gomulka, Gierek and Moczar, were both absent from

⁷⁶Dimitri Simes, in a letter to the author, Mar 2, 1977. Simes, a Soviet emigre, was in Moscow during the 1970 riots.

⁷⁷New York Times, Dec 18, 1970. For additional ideas along these lines, see also the London Times, Dec 17, 1970.

the Politburo meetings of December 10th through the 14th. More importantly, neither of them was in attendance at the Sixth Party Plenum which met on 14 December when the fateful decision to announce the price increases was made.⁷⁸ Could this have been a move to avoid blame for that decision? Originally planned for late January 1971, it is not quite clear how the decision to proceed early was reached, but such are the strange ways of political intrigue. Leopold Labedz, editor of Survey (London), thinks that it may have been prompted by information fed to Gomulka by the security police (under Moczar) that led him to believe that the risk of serious reaction to the increases was small.⁷⁹ There can be little doubt, however, that the Natolin and Partisan factions had formed a coalition that developed into a conspiracy against Gomulka. The day after Gomulka reportedly suffered a nervous collapse (Dec 17, 1970), security police units surrounded his villa, isolating him from his supporters. The following day, a special meeting of the Politburo took place in Natolin under the chairmanship of Gierek, and on 20 December an Extraordinary Plenum of the Central Committee endorsed several changes in the composition of the leadership. Gierek succeeded Gomulka, who resigned for reasons of ill health,⁸⁰ and to add further

⁷⁸ Labedz, Interplay, p. 23.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ New York Times, Dec 21, 1970. A medical communique signed by the Minister of Health, Jan Kostrzewski, said that Gomulka had been suffering from circulatory ailments, causing temporary disturbance of sight, and that he was hospitalized on December 19, 1970.

credence to the theory of a Natolinist-Partisan conspiracy, Moczar was elevated to full membership in the Politburo.⁸¹

An indication that the army may have been involved in the conspiracy is the fact that Wojcieck Jaruzelski, Poland's Minister of Defense, became the first professional military officer to be chosen a candidate member of the Politburo.⁸²

There were three necessary elements in the removal of Gomulka. First, a coalition of rival factions developed into a conspiracy determined to replace Gomulka and his key supporters; second, the economic conditions that created a climate in which violent reaction to the regime could occur; and third, the necessary spark to set off that violence at the right moment.

It is possible that the Soviets were aware of the plan from the very start, but it is more probable, as Myron Rush points out, that they were informed only after the coup had succeeded -- that is, when Gomulka was forced to resign.⁸³ There were reports of large Soviet, East German, and Czechoslovakian troop movements during the rioting, but these were probably only precautionary moves in case the violence spread dangerously -- especially to areas outside Poland.⁸⁴ A rather

⁸¹New York Times, Dec 21, 1970 and London Times, Dec 22, 1970.

⁸²Myron Rush, How Communist States Change Their Rulers (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974), p. 176.

⁸³Ibid, p. 179.

⁸⁴New York Times, Dec 20, 1970.

strong indication that the Gierek succession was met with acceptance (if not with enthusiasm) by the Soviets was the release of the Tass communique concerning the Polish Party Politburo shakeup within one hour after the announcement was made in Warsaw on 20 December. Furthermore, the Tass report was an exact re-broadcast of the statement released by PAP, the Polish press agency.⁸⁵ David Bonavia, news analyst of the London Times, who was in Moscow at the time, viewed this anomaly as a suggestion that the Tass editors were caught unawares and therefore decided to play it safe by re-broadcasting the PAP release.⁸⁶ A more plausible theory is that the Polish statement was issued quickly and without change because it had been previously cleared for release in Moscow. On the following day, 21 December, Edward Gierek received official congratulations from Leonid Brezhnev in the name of the Soviet Union's Central Committee, and from other leaders of the "fraternal parties." Brezhnev's message contained not the slightest hint of criticism of the way in which the Polish crisis had been handled, and expressed confidence in the new leadership's ability to solve its problems. It

⁸⁵New York Times, Dec 21, 1970. For the complete text of the PAP communique as released in Moscow, see Pravda, Dec 21, 1970, p. 1, translation in The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XXII, No. 51, Jan 19, 1971, p. 6.

⁸⁶David Bonavia, "Shock and Surprise in Moscow," London Times, Dec 21, 1970.

read, in part, "Our Party and the Soviet people know you well as a prominent Party leader and statesman of peoples' Poland, a sincere friend of the Soviet Union (and) a staunch Communist-internationalist." Even Ulbricht, East Germany's "Prussian Stalin," known for his miserly treatment of fraternal commitments, saw fit to bestow upon Gierek, "the most cordial wishes for good luck," and referred to "our firm fraternal affinity with Poland and its Marxist-Leninist party."⁸⁷ Only Peking failed to immediately mention the changes in Poland's leadership, and later were accused in a Pravda editorial of taking a position "indistinguishable" from the speculations, fact-juggling and deliberate falsehoods that imperialists propaganda has resorted to."⁸⁸

The above analysis of the events as they developed in December 1970, should also suggest the answer to why the Soviets did not intervene militarily. Unlike 1956, the central issue was not that the Soviets were convinced of Polish resistance (although that could have soon become the central issue if the Soviets, for whatever reason, had decided to actively oppose the Gierek-Moczar conspiracy), but whether or not the Poles appeared able to control the situation. The relative speed and resolve with which this was accomplished left little doubt that Gomulka's opponents were comfortably in command.

⁸⁷London Times, Dec 22, 1970.

⁸⁸Pravda, Dec 31, 1970, p. 5, translation in The Current Digest of the Soviet Press, Vol. XXII, Jan 26, 1970, pp. 1-2.

VI. POLAND UNDER GIEREK, 1971-1976

In the months following the removal of Gomulka, the temporary alliance between Poland's opposing factions came to an abrupt end and Party rivalry soon developed into another full-fledged power struggle. Gierek's position however, was complicated by persistent economic conditions which, while instrumental in his successful bid for power, suddenly became his responsibility to cope with. Resolution of the key domestic problems of economic reform would be largely dependent on the degree of change that would prove acceptable to or at least tolerated by the Soviet Union. As Adam Bromke correctly pointed out, "Gierek had to carry out his policies in Poland with one eye on Moscow. Heightened Soviet sensitivity to political changes in the Communist nations of Eastern Europe, especially in the aftermath of the events of 1968 in Czechoslovakia was doubtless a factor that Gierek could not ignore."⁸⁹

Gierek's immediate steps to reform the Polish economy were covered in general in section V, above. More specifically, a combination of measures were introduced, designed to compensate low-income families by increasing the minimum wage, granting a graduated raise for families earning more than the minimum, and providing family allowances for families with two or more children. Pensions and disability payments were also

⁸⁹Adam Bromke, "Poland Under Gierek: A New Political Style," Problems of Communism, Vol. XXI, Sep-Oct 1972, p. 2.

raised and housing construction was accelerated.⁹⁰ As was also pointed out however, these measures fell short of their intended goals and it took a three-day strike in Szczecin in January and a general strike of some 10,000 textile workers in Lodz before the Gierek leadership was finally forced into an across-the-board revocation of the December price increases. This was made possible by a large Soviet credit. (Interestingly enough, Lodz, Poland's largest textile center, holds a special place in the tradition of worker unrest not only in Poland, but in Russia as well, to whom Lodz belonged until 1918. The Revolution of 1905 in Russia was highlighted by a general strike in Lodz, which had to be bloodily suppressed by Tsarist troops after some five days of street fighting.⁹¹) With the immediate causes of worker dissatisfaction removed, the Gierek regime then turned to a meaningful solution to Poland's long-term economic woes -- the need for reform in agricultural policy. A comprehensive reform program was announced in April 1971, to go into effect the following January. The outdated and unpopular system of compulsory deliveries of livestock, grain, and potatoes to the state was

⁹⁰Trybuna Ludu (Warsaw), Jan 1, 1971. Joint announcement of the Council of Ministers and the Central Council of Trade Unions. See also Gierek's speech to the CC Plenum, Feb 8, 1971. References cited in "A New Economic Approach," by Michael Gamarnikov, Problems in Communism, Sep-Oct 1972, p. 22.

⁹¹Basil Dmytryshyn, USSR, A Concise History (New York: Scribners, 1965), p. 31. See also Hugh Seton-Watson, The Russian Empire 1801-1917 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 607.

abolished; changes were made in property laws in favor of the individual farmer; the system of land taxes was modernized; and health services and other benefits were extended to farmers and their families.⁹² More important than the reform measures themselves however, was the more fundamental rationale behind the new economic policy, reflecting a pragmatic, consumer-oriented approach designed to improve the material well-being of the population at large. Highly unusual (in a socialist state), this basic concept was succinctly expressed by one Polish writer in the following terms:

"The new socio-economic policy is based on the assumption that it is already possible for the present generation to benefit from the economic progress of Poland....The crux of the problem is, while not ignoring economic growth, to attain the maximum possible standard of living. In short, the objective is to promote parallel social and economic development of the country."⁹³

Inherent in this concept was the belief that increased consumption is a desirable factor. Jan Szydlak, one of Gierek's lieutenants and new Politburo member, made this point clear in a speech delivered in Katowice during the fall of 1971. He said, "...increased consumption is an important and necessary factor in the process of economic growth, a factor which stimulates production and technological progress, improves organization, and results in greater labor productivity."⁹⁴

⁹²Michael Gamarnikov, "A New Economic Approach," Problems of Communism, Vol. XXI, Sep-Oct 1972, pp. 20-22.

⁹³Natalia Swidzinska, Polska lat Siedemdziesiatych, (Poland in the Seventies) (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1972), p. 8, cited in Bromke, "Poland Under Gierek," p. 8.

⁹⁴Jan Szydlak, speech delivered in Katowice, Trybuna Ludu (Warsaw), Oct 14, 1971.

But even while dealing with the country's economic crisis, Gierek was forced to simultaneously wage a power struggle that proved him to be as politically ruthless as he was known to be "technocratically efficient." Most of Gomulka's supporters had been removed from leadership positions by the end of 1970, but Gierek soon realized (if indeed he ever had any doubt) that he faced a new challenge from the Partisans led by Mieczyslaw Moczar who had been elevated to Politburo membership as a reward for his collaboration in the temporary alliance against Gomulka. As early as February, 1971, the Warsaw daily Zycie Warszawy was reporting "an acute struggle ...between the old and the new at many levels" in Poland.⁹⁵ By spring of 1971, Gierek, in a move to establish his position of undisputed leader, began his move against Moczar. Almost immediately upon return from a trip to Moscow, Gierek relieved Moczar of his secretariat duties in charge of security, replacing him with a trusted follower, Stanislaw Kania. This move was facilitated by popular distaste of Moczar following the appearance in January 1971 of a document attributed to Gdynia shipyard workers. The document, in the form of a leaflet and distributed widely throughout Poland, accused Moczar of using brutality to suppress the December riots.⁹⁶ Moczar

⁹⁵Zycie Warszawy, Feb 19, 1971. Cited in Bromke, "Poland Under Gierek."

⁹⁶New York Times, Jan 28, 1971. This document, titled "Bloody Thursday in Gdynia," contained graphic descriptions of the alleged brutality, referring to such emotional scenes as dipping the Polish flag in the blood of a young boy slain on his way to school, and the machine-gunning of a pregnant woman.

resigned from the secretariat altogether, and Kaniz launched a massive purge of the security apparatus. During 1971, more than 10,000 members were expelled from the Party and some 100,000 others were allowed to resign in a process of "reinvigoration."⁹⁷

In a move designed to speed up the consolidation of power process, the February Plenum of the Central Committee decided to convene the Sixth Congress of the PZPR a full year ahead of schedule. Convened in Warsaw in December 1971, the Congress elected a new 115-member Central Committee, of whom only 45 had been full members of the previous one. The new Central Committee elected a new Politburo and Secretariat of eleven members each, only seven of whom had served previously, and none of these had served prior to 1968. Gierek, who had been in the Politburo since 1959 and in the Central Committee since 1954, clearly emerged from this rejuvenation as the top figure in Poland's power elite.⁹⁸

The explosive events of 1970 in Poland, -- the conspiracy against Gomulka, the riots, and the renewed power struggle following Gomulka's downfall, often overshadow another very important event in Soviet-Polish relations -- the Polish-West German treaty of December 1970. Preliminary talks began in

⁹⁷This brief account of the 1971 political changes is integrated from A. Ross Johnson's "Polish Perspectives, Past and Present," Problems of Communism, Vol. XX, Jul-Aug 1971, and Adam Bromke, "Poland Under Gierek."

⁹⁸Ibid.

Warsaw in February, and six rounds at the foreign minister level were held through November. Largely a result of West German Chancellor Willy Brandt's policy of "Ostpolitik," an agreement was signed only days before Gomulka was forced to step down, but neither side had ratified the pact, and the Bonn government was obviously alarmed that nearly a year of concerted diplomacy might have been to no avail.⁹⁹ Bonn's fears were soon allayed however, when Wacław Piatowski, chief Polish delegate to West Germany, told the West German Foreign Ministry on 23 December that the new leadership in Warsaw had decided to proceed with the ratification.¹⁰⁰ The treaty, signed under Gomulka's leadership and ratified under Gierek's, gave de-facto recognition by the Federal Republic of Germany to Poland's post-war frontier on the Oder-Neisse Rivers.¹⁰¹ For twenty-five years since World War II, the Soviet Union was the sole guarantor of Poland's new western frontier. The real significance of the treaty for Soviet-Polish relations then, was that it removed the one profound justification for Polish alliance with the Soviet Union. As J. F. Brown put it in a RAND report on relations between the Soviet Union and East European nations:

"Once the western frontier was recognized by Bonn, each partner to the alliance, Moscow and Warsaw, had a new problem on its hands. The Polish leadership's problem

⁹⁹ New York Times, May 10, 11, & 25, and Dec 21, 1970.

¹⁰⁰ London Times, Dec 24, 1970.

¹⁰¹ An English translation of the treaty, provided to the author by the Bonn Government, appears in Appendix B.

was to check, distract, or even sublimate the nation's instinctive, cultural, traditional, religious gravitation to the West. For the Soviets, the...situation now seemed to dictate the even stronger necessity to bind Poland more closely to the East, through integrating it more closely into the Soviet-dominated...system of alliances and, at the domestic levels, to mitigate the role of those institutions and systems -- notably the Roman Catholic Church and the private peasantry -- which seriously impede the ruling party's monopoly of power."¹⁰²

It is the humble judgment of this author that the Polish leadership has been no more able (if indeed they are willing) to check, distract, or sublimate Poland's gravitation to the West, than has the Kremlin leadership been able to mitigate the role of those institutions which tend to impede the monolithic power of the Communist Party in Poland.

¹⁰²J. F. Brown, "Relations Between the Soviet Union and its Eastern European Allies," RAND Report, R-1742-PR, November 1975.

VII. GIEREK THREATENED

The most recent outbreaks of violence and workers' protest in Poland occurred less than a year ago (June, 1976). Analysis of the 1976 riots will also be conducted from the vantage of two separate frames of reference. It must be pointed out however, that the events of 1976 were relatively minor when compared with the previous crises and the question of Soviet intervention does not loom particularly large. A more reasonable question therefore, is how or why were the worker demonstrations and protests allowed to succeed? Even short of active Soviet involvement, the Polish leadership might have taken considerably more stringent measures of its own to suppress the protests and impose its will. Again, different frames of reference will suggest different answers.

The first perspective will concentrate largely on the economic determinants of the problem, while the second will attempt to focus on political determinants and their implications.

A. POLAND, 1976: A FIRST LOOK

Once he had consolidated his political position and successfully managed Poland's short-term economic problems, Edward Gierek moved ahead throughout the first half of the 1970's with a crash program to create a stronger industrial base. This was accomplished largely through an expansion of economic relations with the West made possible by the general climate of East-West detente. Growth was stimulated

and technology modernized through Western imports, much of which was financed by extensive credits. The oil crisis of 1973-1974 led to drastic increases in the price of Soviet oil, further adding to Poland's growing deficit.¹⁰³ Meanwhile, however, Poland's domestic economic situation improved considerably. National income increased by an impressive 60% during the 1971-1975 Five Year Plan, while industrialization climbed 70%. Whereas during the Gomulka regime (1956-1970) real wages increased a modest 1.8% annually, they averaged a comfortable 8% yearly rise during 1971-1975 under Gierek. Production of consumer goods rose by 79% during the period, and new (Western) products imported from West Germany, Britain, and the United States began to appear on Polish markets. Polish hopes were for only a temporary disequilibrium in foreign trade until industrial progress made possible larger Polish exports to redress the growing imbalance.¹⁰⁴ The keystone of Gierek's economic policy for greater industrialization and improved living conditions was expanded interaction with the West. Inflation and recession in the West, however, especially since 1974, drove the price of imports to Poland sharply upward, reducing demand for Polish exports. Several poor crop years slowed down the increase

¹⁰³Clyde Farnsworth, "Polish Price Crisis Reflects Inflation Ills," New York Times, Jun 29, 1976.

¹⁰⁴Thomas E. Heneghan, "Polish Trade and Polish Trends: Economic and Political Considerations," Radio Free Europe Research, Nov 13, 1975.

in agricultural production and, when coupled with the relatively high rate of growth in real wages, resulted in serious shortages of food.¹⁰⁵ One must remember that throughout this entire period, largely as a result of the bitter experiences of the attempted price increases in 1970, prices of basic foodstuffs remained frozen. The dilemma facing Gierek was trying to maintain a centralized economy domestically, while attempting to profitably operate in a free market economy internationally.

Food shortages began to occur more and more frequently, and there were labor disturbances among dockworkers in Gdynia in the summer of 1974.¹⁰⁶ Later that year, miners in Katowice demonstrated dissatisfaction, and early in 1975, frustrated housewives ransacked and demolished a grocery store in Warsaw, and had to be placated with promises from Party and Government leaders.¹⁰⁷

The fundamental laws of economics could not be defied forever, and on 24 June, 1976, Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz presented new price proposals to the Sejm (Polish parliament). The price increases (nearly 70% for meat products and 40% for grain), intended to curtail consumption while stimulating production, were to go into effect on 28 June.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵U.S. News and World Report, Oct 25, 1976.

¹⁰⁶London Times, Sep 1, 1974, p. 6.

¹⁰⁷New York Times, Jun 13, 1975, p. 6.

¹⁰⁸Radio Free Europe Research, Background Report No. 176, Aug 16, 1976.

News of the proposed price changes was received by Polish workers in their, by now, traditional fashion -- strikes! -- protests! -- and demonstrations leading to violence, looting, and the sacking of Party headquarters! The day following the public announcement, violence erupted in the cities of Plock, Radom, and Ursus (a suburb of Warsaw). Unrest was also reported in other cities including the Baltic ports. Rioting workers tore up railroad tracks twenty miles outside of Warsaw, and in Radom (sixty miles south of Warsaw), demonstrators set fire to the Communist Party headquarters and had to be dispersed with tear gas. In delayed accounts of the incidents, Polish television reported on 26 June that factories and shops had been looted, and on 27 June, that food and liquor stores were looted in Radom. According to official Polish government sources, which usually tend to drastically under-estimate casualties or riots, at least seventy-five policemen were injured and two demonstrators were killed.¹⁰⁹

The Polish leadership vividly recalled the somewhat similar crisis of 1970, and wasted no time demonstrating that they had learned from past mistakes. During the height of the June riots, less than twenty-four hours after announcing the proposed price changes, Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz

¹⁰⁹ Reports of the June 1976 food price riots were contained in many individual news services. I have chosen to rely on the New York Times, Jun 26, 27, & 28, 1976; Hamburg DPA (German), 27 Jun 76, translation in FBIS Daily Report, Vol. II, No. 125, 28 Jun 76; and Facts on File, Vol. 36, No. 1860, Jul 3, 1976, p. 482.

appeared briefly on television to say that all price increases would be delayed "pending consultations with the workers."¹¹⁰ The unprecedented speed with which the price increases were abandoned, dramatically testifies to the terror that worker protests create among Warsaw rulers. The Poles, after all, according to the internationally acclaimed sociologist, Jan Szczepanski (University of Lodz), are possessed with a traditional inclination toward individualism and anarchy, and have a natural disdain for law and order. "The years of foreign rule and the years of underground struggle," he says, "have accustomed Poles to disregard the law as something foreign and irrelevant. The overcoming of this attitude is of crucial importance for the government."¹¹¹ Adam Bromke makes the interesting observation that the latest outbreak of violence in Poland occurred almost twenty years to the date after the Poznan riots of June 28, 1956,¹¹² representing two decades of strife between Communist leadership and the Polish people. "Today," says Bromke, "the Polish people are in a more assertive mood than ever before, and the present (1976) confrontation -- unless handled with great caution -- could evolve into a more acute crisis than those in the past."¹¹³

¹¹⁰New York Times, Jun 28, 1976.

¹¹¹Jan Szczepanski, Polish Society (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 50.

¹¹²Adam Bromke, "A New Juncture in Poland," Problems of Communism, Vol. XXV, Sep-Oct 1976, p. 17.

¹¹³Ibid.

Why were the protests allowed to succeed? Could not the Polish leadership have used more force to impose its will on the people? According to the analysts of the New York Times, the protests were allowed to succeed primarily because they represented dissent against "economic" conditions and not political ones. "Poles," according to the Times, "with the lowest standard of living in Eastern Europe, want improved economic conditions, not a non-Communist system."¹¹⁴ The Soviets, on the other hand, were beset by their own shortages in food production¹¹⁵ (which were relieved through massive grain imports from North America), and apparently welcomed the Poles "solution" to the June riots, ie, withdrawal of the sharply increased prices and a pledge to search for a more acceptable plan.

B. POLAND, 1976: A SECOND LOOK

The conventional wisdom of American thought tends to overrate, or at least to be overly concerned with economic and fiscal matters as the critical component of a society. While this may be a workable approach with regard to the technologically developed, politically pluralistic, capitalist nations of the West, it is often overlooked that Communist nations build their societies (including their economy) around

¹¹⁴New York Times, Jun 27, 1976.

¹¹⁵Clyde Farnsworth, "Polish Price Crisis Reflects Inflation Ills," New York Times, Jun 29, 1976.

a base of political power. Therefore from a Communist, and especially a Soviet perspective, a threat to the political base is perceived as the crucial menace which jeopardizes the safety and order of a nation.

A "healthy" sign that the Gierek leadership was aware of the need for political solidarity and continued fraternal relations with the Soviet Union, was the removal of Franciszek Szlachcic, Minister of the Interior (security chief), from the PUWP Politburo in 1974. Szlachcic, who had earlier helped Gierek to consolidate his position following the 1970 change-over, began to adopt liberal tendencies, and by 1973 was cautiously advocating greater autonomy from the Soviet Union.¹¹⁶ Soon after Szlachcic's dismissal, as if to further reassure the Soviets that matters were well in hand, Gierek and his inner circle of faithful followers renewed their "ideological offensive" in a move toward greater political conformity. In March 1974, a national conference of ideological activists was convened in Warsaw during which Politburo member and Gierek lieutenant, Jan Szydlak, stated the objectives of the PUWP's offensive. Foremost was that it should "...present Poland as an integral part of the socialist commonwealth, inseparably linked by ideology, alliance, and many-sided cooperation with the USSR." Szydlak also levelled a strong denunciation of the reactionary core of the Catholic Church

¹¹⁶Bromke, "A New Juncture in Poland," p. 7.

which he characterized as "the only center of social rightest forces."¹¹⁷

But rather than snuff out political dissent, the ideological offensive only served to stir up more ferment in Poland, and drive it into the open. A petition addressed to the Minister of Culture, Jozef Tejchma, for example, written by the famed poet, Antoni Slonimski and signed by some fifteen well-known writers, scholars, and artists, demanded freedom of culture, education, and religion for Poles living in the Soviet Union.¹¹⁸ The Catholic Church, under the leadership of Cardinal Wyszynski, as if to challenge the charges earlier attributed to Jan Szydlak, transcended the bounds of religious matters and questioned the Party's claim of Polish-Soviet solidarity. Wyszynski appealed especially to Polish nationalism when he said in a 1974 sermon:

"For us, next to God, our first love is Poland. After God one must above all remain faithful to our Homeland, to the Polish national culture...And if we see slogans advocating love for all the peoples and all the nations, we do not oppose them; yet above all we demand the right to live in accordance with the spirit, history, culture, and language of our own Polish land."¹¹⁹

In an attempt to put more teeth into his floundering ideological offensive, Gierek then decided to amend the Constitution in order to "re-affirm" the socialist nature of Poland. As proposed in December, 1975, the amendments would

¹¹⁷Nowe Drogi, July 1974, cited in Bromke, "New Juncture," pp. 9-10.

¹¹⁸Radio Free Europe Research, Dec 20, 1974. News of Slonimski's death in a car accident at the age of 81, was carried in the New York Times, Jul 6, 1976, p. 28.

¹¹⁹Polonia (Chicago), June 6, 1974.

have declared Poland a "socialist republic" (an obvious semantical link with the Soviet Union), stipulated a special relationship with the Soviet Union ("unshakeable fraternal bond with the Soviet Union"), assigned a "leading role in society" to the Party, and made civil rights dependent on compliance with duties to the state. The proposed amendments met with so much opposition and criticism during the early months of 1976 that the Party was forced to back down.¹²⁰ Foremost among the opposition was a broad spectrum of fifty-nine intellectuals, led by the highly respected economist, Professor Edward Lipinski, who invoked the Helsinki declaration in support of their petition ("The Petition of the 59") for a broadening of democratic liberties.¹²¹ Cardinal Wyszyński denounced the proposed amendments almost immediately, and still another block vote of protest was indicated by a second group of some 100 prominent Poles who sent a letter of complaint to the parliamentary committee in charge of preparing the amendments.¹²² Some opposition even appeared within Party cadres when a local Party organization also submitted a report critical of the proposed amendments.¹²³ The amendments ultimately adopted, with only a single member of Parliament abstaining, continued to describe Poland as a Peoples' Republic, and acknowledged a central, but not encompassing

¹²⁰Facts on File, Vol. 36, No. 1849, Apr 17, 1976, p. 268.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Le Monde, Feb 10, 1976.

¹²³New York Times, Mar 19, 1976.

role for the Communist Party. The "special relationship" with the Soviet Union was watered down within the context of Polish cooperation with all nations.¹²⁴ Then in response to Party charges against signatories of the "Petition of the 59," Professor Lipinski, an elderly but widely respected veteran Socialist, addressed an open letter to Gierek calling for pluralistic socialism on the model of the Italian and French Communists. Even more disturbing to the Soviets, Lipinski was quite clear with regard to Polish autonomy.

The imposition of the Soviet system has devastated our social and moral life....We are being compelled to support Soviet foreign policy unconditionally, and we have ceased to be an independent element in world politics. This is often contrary to Polish interests. We took part in the military invasion of Czechoslovakia, helping to suppress the process of renewal in that country at the very time when it was emancipating itself from Soviet influence....Today there is no more important goal for Poland than the reassertion of its sovereignty. Only after regaining political independence will it be possible to undertake systematic economic reform and to restructure the political and social system."¹²⁵

Dissident opinion of the intelligentsia, while resolute in its demands for cultural and social liberalism, usually takes an intellectual approach and tends to be more theoretical than pragmatic. Even Lipinski's open letter to Gierek, for example, considered to be one of the most forceful documents of dissident opinion among the intelligentsia, called

¹²⁴Facts on File, Apr 17, 1976, p. 268.

¹²⁵Trybuna, No. 23/79, 1976. Cited in Bromke, "New Juncture in Poland," p. 13. Not to be confused with the official paper, Trybuna Ludu, Trybuna is an underground publication which circulated throughout Poland in samizdat form.

for "reassertion of sovereignty" and "systematic reform," measures that might be argued in terms of incremental change, gradual progress, or in terms of degree. But dissidence of a much more radical and potentially dangerous nature also exists in Poland. Just prior to the June 1976 food price riots, a highly unusual document circulated in Poland in samizdat form, titled the "Program of the Polish Coalition for Independence," that took an almost revolutionary (or counterrevolutionary) approach in its proposal for change in Poland. Emanating from an organized political group of unnamed members, the document calls for resolute opposition to Communism, advocating a return to parliamentary democracy and a partial return to capitalism! It also predicts periods of crisis and stresses the need for preconceived alternative plans:

"It is impossible to anticipate when the crisis will come into the open...it may begin in Poland. We must be ready for this, and consequently we should be conscious not only of what we reject, but also of what we want to accomplish....Opposition must not be reduced to grumbling and gossiping. We must at all times be prepared with alternative plans and goals. This is above all the duty of the Polish intelligentsia, which historically has been burdened with this responsibility for the spiritual fortunes of our nation. It is also the task of the most numerous social group, namely the industrial workers, who command the greatest power."¹²⁶

It is much too soon and there is far too little evidence to suggest that there was a connection between organized political opposition and the food price riots of June, 1976, but

¹²⁶Glos Polski, (Toronto), May 27-Jun 24, 1976. Cited in Problems of Communism, Vol. XXV, Sep-Oct 1976, p. 14.

certainly Gierek, who himself was able to exploit economic conditions in 1970 for political gains, is well aware of the possible implications. This awareness no doubt prompted the almost immediate response to the demonstrations and prompt withdrawal of the price increases.

To signal his political solidarity to the Soviets, Gierek quickly staged a show of Party support for his policies, and the day following the riots, the Communist Party held nation-wide rallies condemning the rioting, and radio and television stations broadcast letters backing Gierek and other Party and Government leaders.¹²⁷ This timely demonstration that Gierek and the Polish leadership were still firmly in political control of matters in Poland may have helped to allay Soviet apprehension, but if in fact the Kremlin leaders ever seriously considered the possibility of offering "fraternal assistance to the healthy forces" (which would be difficult to demonstrate so soon after the event), they would have been more effectively deterred by other considerations. The disorders could not have occurred at a worse time, as Soviet intervention would have certainly wreaked havoc on the Conference of European Communist and Workers' Parties which was scheduled to open on June 29 (only four days after the riots broke out) in the Stadt Berlin Hotel of East Berlin.¹²⁸ East

¹²⁷ Facts on File, Vol. 36, No. 1860, Jul 3, 1976, p. 482.

¹²⁸ Rabotnichesko Delo (Sofia), June 30, 1976.

German newspapers wasted no time in showing concern over the disorders in Poland, and on the very eve of the conference, published the Polish Government's retraction of the price increases,¹²⁹ indicating that the East Germans considered the matter closed. The general climate of East-West detente also presents a restraining influence on the Soviets, especially when considered along with other factors. And finally, the relatively recent development of so-called "Eurocommunism" poses yet another inhibiting influence on excessive Soviet intervention.¹³⁰

While the implications and ramifications of Eurocommunism are very much a matter of current debate, at least one widely held view is that for East Europeans in general, Eurocommunism is one more source of political leverage for more independence from Moscow.¹³¹ Interestingly enough, this might well be considered a mixed blessing by the Polish leadership, as they themselves have experienced the pressures of Eurocommunist influence in their own domestic affairs. Following the June riots in 1976, for example, and the subsequent charges and sentences of several workers, one of Poland's leading dissidents, historian Jacek Kuron, sent an open letter to the Italian Communist Party leader, Enrico Berlinguer, requesting

¹²⁹"East Germans Concerned," special to the New York Times, Jun 29, 1976.

¹³⁰For the most current comprehensive discussion of the development of "Eurocommunism" in a single periodical to date, see Problems of Communism, Vol. XXVI, Jan-Feb 1977, which devotes the entire edition to three articles on Eurocommunism by Devin Devlin, E. Mujal-Leon, and Dimitri Kitsikis.

¹³¹Charles Gati, "The Europeanization of Communism," Foreign Affairs, Vol. 55, No. 3, April 1977, pp. 539-553.

his support on behalf of the jailed workers. The PCI responded promptly with a message from the Secretariat to the PUWP expressing "hope that measures tending to show moderation and also clemency may be adopted and publicized."¹³² One can only speculate on the effect of this unusual source of interference in Polish domestic politics, but it is interesting to note that most of the workers that were sentenced and jailed for participating in the June riots (including some whose sentences were for up to ten years), have since been released.¹³³

Among Polish dissidents at least, Eurocommunism is definitely a welcome development. In an interview with one of Rome's L'Espresso's reporters, Polish dissident historian Adam Michnik, one of the leaders of the 1968 student movement (and currently a promoter of the Committee for the Defense of the Workers¹³⁴) made it quite clear that he feels intervention by the Italian Communists helped make it "possible to create socialism with a human face in East Europe."¹³⁵ But, it should be pointed out, Michnik holds no false hopes that Eurocommunism, or for that matter the West in general, would deter a Soviet determination to intervene in Poland:

¹³² L'Unita, 30 July 1976, cited in Radio Free Europe Research, Background Report, No. 176, 16 Aug 1976.

¹³³ Christian Science Monitor, April 18, 1977, p. 6.

¹³⁴ This committee, which now claims over 10,000 supporters, was formed following police reprisals against participants in the 1976 riots in Radom and Ursus.

¹³⁵ L'Espresso (Rome), Dec 5, 1976, p. 45, in FBIS, Daily Report, Vol. II, 29 Dec 76, p. G1-G2.

Question: Do you believe that Eurocommunism's present position could prevent a possible Soviet intervention, like in Prague?

Answer: In Poland nobody believes in help from the West. (emphasis mine) ... (Compromises) to which the government would have to submit would not be the result of Eurocommunism but of elementary political realism.¹³⁶

Nor does there appear to be any doubt in the minds of Americans as to where the West in general and the U.S. in particular stands in relation to Eastern Europe. A 1975 Harris Poll, for example, reports that only 39 percent of the American public would support the extension of U.S. assistance to Western Europe if that region were attacked, and only 11 percent would favor any defense of Yugoslavia.¹³⁷ As recently as 1970, President Nixon clearly indicated this government's policy toward Eastern Europe as a function of U.S.-Soviet relations, when he stated in his annual message to Congress:

"It is not the intention of the United States to undermine the legitimate security interests of the Soviet Union. The time is certainly past...when any power would seek to exploit Eastern Europe to obtain strategic advantage against the Soviet Union. It is clearly no part of our policy."¹³⁸

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷John E. Rielly, ed., American Public Opinion and U.S. Foreign Policy 1975 (Chicago: Chicago Council on Foreign Relations, 1975), p. 59.

¹³⁸Cited in Charles Gati, "The Forgotten Region," Foreign Policy, No. 19, Summer 1975, pp. 135-145;

VIII. CONCLUSION

What does this study of crises in 1956, 1970, and 1976 portend for the future of Poland? Predictions of political developments are always hazardous -- sometimes little more than guesses. But careful analysis and examination of developments in Soviet-East European affairs can suggest several broadly generalized predictions.

The Third Congress of the Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America was held at McGill University in Montreal on May 16, 1975.¹³⁹ A panel discussion by distinguished experts on Poland ensued (chaired by Adam Bromke), in which the future of Poland for the next twenty-five years was the subject at hand. By far the most clearly defined alternatives for the future of Poland were articulated by Zbigniew Brzezinski, who envisioned four possible developments; (1) complete independence, (2) relative independence, (3) continued dependence (on the Soviet Union), and (4) total absorption by the Soviet Union as another republic. Brzezinski went on to say that while present trends seem to favor a condition of continued dependence, he personally predicts a process of gradual pluralistic evolution, which will quietly transform Poland into a condition of relative independence.¹⁴⁰ Andrzej Korbonski, on the other hand, while he agrees with the

¹³⁹A. Bromke, Z. Brzezinski, Z. Fallenbuchl, A. Gella, L. Kolakowski, and A. Stypulkowski, "Poland in the Last Quarter of the Twentieth Century: A Panel Discussion," Slavic Review, Vol. 34, No. 4, Dec 1975, pp. 769-789.

¹⁴⁰Ibid., pp. 770-771.

probable development of pluralistic evolution, feels that it will be combined with technological adaptation.¹⁴¹

Both of these conditions imply incremental or evolutionary change (one explicitly, the other implicitly) and do not take into account the explosive set-back that could occur a la Czechoslovakia, 1968, which would act to disrupt, perhaps even reverse, evolutionary change. That potentially disruptive force has been taken into account here, and incorporated into the development of the prospects for the future of Poland.

Thoughtful reflections on the nature of future developments in Poland suggest a few general propositions. The aspirations of the Poles are similar to those of people throughout Eastern Europe, perhaps the world. Arranged in a sort of "Maslow's hierarchy of needs" applied to the political sphere, they are: more material prosperity, more personal freedom, and more national independence. All of these aspirations are "relative" by nature and therefore quite impossible of being either completely fulfilled or completely denied in absolute terms. Poland, for example, has experienced enormous progress in industrialization, standards of living, and education -- in absolute terms. Indeed, even when compared with the Soviet Union she has done relatively well. But the Poles, largely due to their natural gravitation to the West, tend to compare their position with that of East Germany, and more recently, even with

¹⁴¹Adnrzej Korbonski, "The Prospects for Change in Eastern Europe," Slavic Review, Vol. 33, No. 2, Jun 1974, pp. 219-239.

that of West Germany, with whom ever since the Warsaw-Bonn Treaty of 1970 she has broadened relations in the political, cultural and economic sectors. In any such comparison with her neighbors to the West, the Poles see a long road ahead for their hope for material prosperity -- to say nothing of their aspirations for personal freedom and national independence. Therefore it seems safe to predict that the Poles will attempt to make further progress in each of these areas. But how far they might go and how successful they might be will depend on how carefully the Polish leadership can chart a course of progress that remains within the limits of Soviet tolerance and acceptability.

A word concerning limits -- these are not limits in the sense of clearly delineated lines, the crossing over of which is readily apparent to the casual observer. Rather they are more like the transition from one color to the next in a rainbow, wherein the "division" between adjacent colors is indistinct and in fact varies (in perception) from observer to observer. Furthermore, conditions and events in Poland do not occur in an international vacuum, or in a "steady state" of world affairs. Soviet decisions are therefore affected by a multiplicity of influences and external restraints. This is to say that a particular development in Poland that might be totally unacceptable to the Soviets today, may for any one of a number of reasons, be tolerated at some other time -- and, of course, vice versa.

Nevertheless it appears that, for the foreseeable future, there are at least two acts that if committed by the Poles will result in Soviet military intervention of the type experienced in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Unless the contemporary world witnesses the disintegration of the Soviet state, either of the following acts by Poland will almost certainly result in Soviet military intervention:

1. Dissolution of the Communist Party or its single-party control of the politics and government of Poland.

2. Any attempt to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact, regardless of whether or not overtures are made to re-align militarily with the West.

Hungary, in 1956, serves as the best illustration of the price to be paid by a Soviet Bloc state that attempts to commit both of these transgressions. Perpetuation of these acts of supreme defiance of the Soviet Union must be avoided by the Polish leadership at all costs if the security of that nation is to be preserved. But, short of these two extreme and highly unlikely measures, it is the thesis of this author that the Polish leadership is capable of taking Poland a long way down the path of national autonomy and independence from the Soviet Union. Warsaw's views on international Communism are probably best expressed in a Novosti article, that appeared earlier this year in the PUWP's official organ, Trybuna Ludu.¹⁴² While purporting to emphasize international unity,

¹⁴²Trybuna Ludu (Warsaw), Jan 17, 1977, p. 7, in FBIS, Daily Report, 21 Jan 77, Vol. III, pp. A1-A3.

the article stressed that Communism is now developing on the national level and that conditions in the individual states are not the same. Falling back on the ideological justification of Lenin's pre-1917 thesis that socialism could not possibly take the same course in various countries, the article stated that social progress can best be ensured, "...if each party preserves its self-dependence and individually works out the political line in keeping with its own country's socioeconomic situation and national characteristics."¹⁴³

Certainly Gierek or his successor would have to clearly establish that there would be no breach of military alliance with the Pact, and ensure the dominance of Communism in Poland. But within these extreme limits, the Poles would be able to comfortably operate without fear of Soviet military intervention. Judging from the historical evidence of 1956, 1970, and 1976, the Soviets would exercise restraint for the following reasons.

1. Assurance that the Poles would put up a ferocious resistance.
2. Fear that the Chinese might take advantage of Soviet involvement and pre-occupation in Eastern Europe by hostile encroachment on Sino-Soviet border areas.
3. Disruption of East-West detente in general and U.S.-U.S.S.R. arms negotiations in particular.

¹⁴³Ibid.

4. Fear of permanently alienating the Western Communist parties (particularly since 1976).

While all of these factors plus the endemic characteristic of bureaucratic paralysis will act to restrain Soviet military intervention in Poland (and a lengthy case might be made for each of them), it is the first, the Soviet leadership's firm conviction that the Poles would resist, that presents the Kremlin with the gravest consequences for any such decision, and which will here be elaborated on further.

Polish resistance, while it would from a military standpoint be doomed to inevitable failure (in the long run), would demand the largest Soviet commitment of military force employed since the Second World War. Appendix C contains the military order of battle of Poland (see p. 95). Even the casual observer can see that not only would Soviet divisions stationed in East Germany have to be diverted to Poland, but a massive assault, on the ground and in the air (possibly even an amphibious assault from the Baltic) would have to be mounted from the East as well. Such a huge military operation might have grave consequences in the bordering republics, especially in the Ukraine and in Lithuania. In a recent study of the dynamics of Soviet military intervention, one analyst suggested that one of the primary reasons half-a-million Soviet-led troops were ordered into action in Czechoslovakia was that the Czechs did not summon their armies and people to the defense of their homeland.¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴Christopher D. Jones, "Soviet Hegemony in Eastern Europe: The Dynamics of Political Autonomy and Military Intervention," World Politics, Jan 1977, pp. 216-241.

Indeed, a proclamation to the people of Czechoslovakia from the Presidium of the Central Committee only a few hours after the Czech borders were violated, called upon "all citizens of the Republic to keep the peace and not resist the advancing armies. (Because defense is impossible) our army, the Security Forces, and the Peoples' Militia were not given the order to defend the country."¹⁴⁵ Nothing in the long-established military tradition of the Poles suggests that the Soviets would find such an easy time of it on Polish soil as they did in Czechoslovakia in 1968.

Of particular importance in the defense of Poland, are the highly organized and well-equipped Border Guard and Territorial Defense Force, which number some 80,000 troops. These special forces differ from traditional home defense units in that they are equipped with a full weapons complement, including tanks and APCs.¹⁴⁶ It is highly probable that they would serve as elite cadre that would augment their units from the 350,000-man Citizens' Militia. One can recall that an underground Polish army of only some 40,000 poorly-equipped troops (supported by Warsaw civilians) managed to

¹⁴⁵Robert Littell, ed., The Czech Black Book, (New York: Praeger 1969), p. 11. Prepared by the Institute of History of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, translated by Praeger.

¹⁴⁶John Erickson, Soviet-Warsaw Pact Force Levels, (Washington: U.S. Strategic Institute, 1976), pp. 83-84.

hold-off joint attacks by five well-equipped German divisions for sixty-three days during the 1944 Battle of Warsaw.¹⁴⁷

Does not the existence of a similarly-motivated (and better equipped) force of nearly half-a-million give the Soviets serious pause for thought? David Vital, in his seminal study of The Survival of Small States,¹⁴⁸ makes an excellent case for the proposition that the more single-minded a minor power is in its determination to resist, the greater are the costs to a major power who contemplates aggression. Given the Soviets' historical penchant for caution and conservatism with regard to direct military involvement, such a bold and potentially costly venture would be entered into if, and only if, one of the two suicidal measures mentioned above were taken by the Poles, ie, the overthrow of Communism or withdrawal from the Warsaw Pact.

But to say that Gierek's regime (or his successor's) could pull off nearly a "Finlandization" of their state within the limits described above, is not to say that they will -- or even that it would be in their best interests to do so.

Poland under Gierek has tasted the somewhat bitter fruit of increased economic relations with the West, and while significant progress has indeed been made toward

¹⁴⁷Robert B. Asprey, War in the Shadows, (Garden City: Doubleday, 1975), pp. 423-424.

¹⁴⁸David Vital, The Survival of Small States: Studies in Small Power-Great Power Conflict, (London: Oxford University Press, 1971), p. 124.

economic development and industrialization, Poland is not likely to favorably compete in the world market for some time to come. For the next decade at least, and possibly through the end of the century, Poland will remain inextricably linked to the Soviet Union and the Eastern Bloc for her economic well-being. Countless examples of this proposition can be used for illustration, from Poland's growing concern with energy resources to her need for markets for (low quality) manufactured goods, but the point is that any successful Polish regime is likely to develop (as indeed Gierek has gone a long way toward developing) what the Germans would call a "Wirtschafts-kombinat" between the State, the Party, and the Polish society. Such a combine will be dependent upon the continuation of membership in a system (the Socialist system of the Soviet Bloc) which is conducive to centralized economic controls and one in which economic integration such as the coordinated production and distribution of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA) is likely to favor the continued development of a Poland that represents a valuable link to the West. Poland has already reached a rather high state of technocratic adaptation in its approach to productivity and modernization, but not sufficiently high to favorably compete in the world market system of the West.

The degree to which Poland moves toward a state of pluralism and broader political participation, is not dependent upon restraints imposed by the Soviet Union (with the caveat that Communism must be preserved), but rather a function of

influences within Polish society and the willingness of the Party leadership to relinquish some of its oligarchic power. This voluntary relinquishment of power is not an inherent characteristic of any ruling elite, Communist or non-Communist, but will likely result from a desire for increased legitimacy -- a condition necessary if that regime is to respond to the flexible conditions of technocratic demands in a modern state. Edward Gierek has demonstrated an unusually high degree of willingness to seek that element of legitimacy. Once initiated, the process of liberalization (economic, social, or political) is extremely difficult to halt. The evolutionary process of limited pluralism and broader participation in Poland has developed its own inertia and is likely to continue undaunted toward a process of "near-Finlandization." Witness, for example, the matter of government sponsored emigration. Whereas in East Germany only a few thousand (mostly those of the elderly and infirm) of the estimated hundreds-of-thousands of exit requests have been granted, Poland, in accordance with a treaty concluded with West Germany in 1975, is presently allowing more than 30,000 ethnic Germans to emigrate each year, until an agreed upon number of some 125,000 are resettled over a four-year period.¹⁴⁹

The West can look forward to an ever-increasing growth in bilateral relations with Poland, who will nevertheless,

¹⁴⁹The Bulletin (Bonn), official publication of the Press and Information Office of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, No. 8, Vol. 24, Feb 24, 1976.

continue to remain aligned militarily and economically with The Soviet Bloc of socialist states.

EPILOGUE

Painful as it is to this author, it is necessary to recount still another very important caveat in the development of prospects for Poland's future. There will always be at least one highly unpredictable factor that could frustrate the most sophisticated political analyst, be he Kremlinologist, classical theorist, or systems analyst. Soviet responses to developments in Poland (or indeed anywhere that impacts on perceived Soviet national interests) will, in the final analysis, be dependent upon certain decisions by the Soviet leadership which itself is characterized by factional divisions that can result in periods of either bureaucratic paralysis or bureaucratic inertia. These factions and interest groups within the Soviet decision-making apparatus are themselves variegated and complex, in a state of continuous change.

Recent developments in the Soviet leadership suggest that Soviet foreign policy is indeed affected by the on-going power struggle and internal conflict within the Soviet regime.

Following a droning, ten-minute report of a speech by Party Leader Leonid Brezhnev, Radio Moscow's 5 p.m. newscast on May 24, 1977 aired this statement: "At a plenary meeting of the Central Committee Nikolai Podgorny was relieved of his duties as a member of the Politburo."¹⁵⁰ Pravda carried

¹⁵⁰Washington Post, May 25, 1977, p. 1.

the news the following morning, in the 26th paragraph of a 29-paragraph account of the meeting.¹⁵¹ Yet on the very day of Podgorny's dismissal, Pravda published a decree signed by him (awarding Yugoslavia's Tito, the Order of the October Revolution), and the Soviet President only recently completed an apparently successful swing through Africa helping to expand Soviet influence there. Thus came to an ignominious end the career of a dutiful party leader who had served for 17 years in the ruling Politburo. Time magazine stated the following week that "the full story of Podgorny's dismissal may remain forever behind the scrim that veils the Kremlin's backstage dramas."¹⁵² In another top-level dismissal, Konstantin Katushev was replaced as the Party secretary in charge of relations with Eastern European regimes. One of the Secretariat's youngest members, the 49-year-old Katushev was for many years considered to be on a meteoric rise in Kremlin decision-making. His replacement, Konstantin Rusakov, is a Brezhnev protege believed to be more of a hard-liner with respect to the independence of East European regimes.¹⁵³ What is certain is that the pulling and tugging, -- the maneuvering for influence within the power structure of the Kremlin -- indeed goes on as bureaucratic fortunes and political personalities continue in a state of change.

¹⁵¹Pravda, May 24, 1977

¹⁵²Time, June 6, 1977, p. 35

¹⁵³New York Times, May 25, 1977, p. 1.

Therefore a specific Soviet response to a particular stimulus, may vary considerably over time and place, and may in fact be a product of fortuity or chance. This enigmatic characteristic of bureaucratic decision-making has been alluded to by one of our nation's most brilliant statesmen:

"The essence of ultimate decision remains impenetrable to the observer -- often, indeed, to the decider himself....There will always be the dark and tangled stretches in the decision-making process -- mysterious even to those who may be most intimately involved."¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴"Preface" to Theodore Sorenson, Decision-Making in the White House: The Olive Branch and the Arrows (New York: 1963).

APPENDIX A

TEXT OF POLISH-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON STATUS OF SOVIET TROOPS TEMPORARILY IN POLAND

(Reprinted from "World Documents," in Current History, Vol. 32, No. 187, March 1957)

ARTICLE 1

The temporary stationing of Soviet military units in Poland may in no way infringe upon the sovereignty of the Polish State and may not lead to their interference in the internal affairs of the Polish Peoples' Republic.

ARTICLE 2

1. The strength of the Soviet troops temporarily stationed on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic and the areas where they are stationed shall be defined on the basis of separate agreements between the Government of the Polish Peoples' Republic and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

2. Soviet troop movements on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic beyond the areas where they are stationed shall in each case require the consent of the Government of the Polish Peoples' Republic or of the Polish authorities authorized by it.

3. Soviet troop exercises or maneuvers outside the areas where they are stationed shall take place on the basis of plans agreed with the Polish authorities or with the consent of the Government of the Polish Peoples' Republic in each case or with the Polish authorities authorized by it.

ARTICLE 3

Soviet troops stationed on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic, persons forming part of these troops as well as members of their families are obliged to respect and preserve the provisions of Polish law.

ARTICLE 4

1. Soldiers of the Soviet troops stationed on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic shall wear uniforms to which they are entitled as well as shall have and bear arms in accordance with the regulations of the Soviet Army.

2. Motorcars and motorcycles of the Soviet military units should be equipped with a registration number and clear markings. The registration numbers and markings shall be fixed by the command of the Soviet troops and brought to the notice of the proper Polish authorities.

3. The competent Polish authorities shall recognize as valid, without verification and without collecting any charge, the driving licenses issued by the competent Soviet authorities to persons forming part of the Soviet troops stationed on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic.

ARTICLE 5

The mode of entry and exit of Soviet military units as well as of persons forming part of the Soviet troops and the members of the families of these persons, into Poland and from Poland, problems concerning the regulations connected with their stay on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic, as well as the kinds of documents required shall be defined in a separate agreement of the Contracting Parties.

ARTICLE 6

The mode and terms of use by Soviet troops of barracks, airfields, training grounds, firing grounds, including installations, electric power, public and trade facilities as well as terms of payment shall be defined in separate agreements between the competent authorities of the Contracting Parties.

ARTICLE 7

The erection and establishment in the areas where Soviet troops are stationed of buildings, airfields, roads, bridges, permanent radio installations including the fixing of their frequencies and power shall require the agreement of the competent Polish authorities. Such agreement shall also be required for the setting up of permanent servicing points for the persons forming part of the Soviet troops outside the areas where they are stationed.

ARTICLE 8

In cases when the Soviet troops vacate barracks used by them as well as airfields, training grounds and firing grounds including permanent installations, these objectives shall be returned to the Polish authorities in a state fit for use. Matters connected with the transfer to the Polish authorities of objectives vacated by the Soviet troops on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic, including objectives erected by the Soviet troops, shall be defined by separate agreements.

ARTICLE 9

Problems of jurisdiction connected with the stay of Soviet troops on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic shall be regulated in the following manner:

1. As a rule, Polish law shall apply and Polish courts, the prosecutor's office as well as other competent Polish authorities dealing with crimes and offenses shall act in cases of crimes and offenses committed by persons forming part of the Soviet troops or members of their families on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic. The military prosecutor's office and the military courts of the Polish Peoples' Republic shall be the competent authority to deal with cases of crimes committed by Soviet soldiers.

2. The provisions of Paragraph 1 of this article shall not apply:

a) in cases when crimes or offenses have been committed by persons forming part of the Soviet troops or by members of their families only against the Soviet Union and also against persons forming part of the Soviet troops or members of their families;

b) in cases when crimes or offenses have been committed by persons forming part of the Soviet troops while carrying out service duties.

In the cases defined in sub-Paragraphs (a) and (b) competent authority shall be Soviet courts as well as other organs acting in accordance with Soviet law.

3. The competent Polish and Soviet authorities may request each other to transfer or accept jurisdiction in individual cases provided for in this article. Such requests shall be examined in a spirit of friendliness.

ARTICLE 10

In cases when crimes have been committed against the Soviet troops stationed on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic as well as against soldiers forming part of their troops, the perpetrators shall bear the same responsibility as in the case of crimes committed against the Polish armed forces and Polish soldiers.

ARTICLE 11

1. The competent Polish and Soviet authorities shall grant each other all assistance including legal assistance dealing with crimes and offenses listed in Articles 9 and 10 of this Agreement.

2. The principles and modes of granting the assistance mentioned in Point 1 of this Article shall be defined in a separate agreement between the Contracting Parties.

ARTICLE 12

On the motion of the competent Polish authorities a person forming part of the Soviet troops, guilty of a breach of the regulations of Polish law, shall be recalled from the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic.

ARTICLE 13

1. The Government of the Soviet Socialist Republics agrees to pay compensation to the Government of the Polish Peoples' Republic

- for material damage which may be caused to the Polish State by the action or failure to act by Soviet military units or individual persons forming part of these units, as well as

- ~~for~~ damage which may be caused to Polish institutions and citizens or citizens of other states staying on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic by Soviet military units or persons forming part of these units while carrying out service duties -

in both cases to the amount fixed by a Mixed Commission set up in accordance with Article 19 of this Agreement on the basis of submitted claims in accordance with the provisions of Polish law. Disputes that may arise from the commitments of Soviet military units shall come within the terms of reference of the Mixed Commission on the same principles.

2. The Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics also agrees to pay compensation to the Government of the Polish Peoples' Republic for damage caused in the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic to Polish institutions and citizens of other states as a result of action or failure to act by persons forming part of the Soviet troops not while fulfilling service duties, as well as a result of action or failure to act by members of the families of persons forming part of the Soviet troops -- in both cases to the value fixed by the competent Polish courts on the basis of claims submitted in relation to those responsible for the damage.

3. The Soviet side shall effect the payment of compensation within three months counting from the day the Mixed Commission has issued its findings or the court verdict has become binding. The competent Polish authorities shall pay the claimant persons and institutions the sums fixed in the decisions of the Mixed Commission or court.

4. Outstanding claims for compensation for damage at the moment this Agreement comes into force, shall be considered by the Mixed Commission.

ARTICLE 14

1. The Government of the Polish Peoples' Republic agrees to pay compensation to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for damage which may be caused by the action or failure to act by Polish state institutions to Soviet military units stationed on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic to their property or to persons forming part of the Soviet troops -- to the value fixed by the Mixed Commission set up in accordance with Article 19 of this Agreement, on the basis of submitted claims, in accordance with the provisions of Polish law. Disputes that may arise for the commitments of Polish state institutions in relation to Soviet military units shall also come within the terms of reference of the Mixed Commission on the same principles.

2. The Government of the Polish Peoples' Republic also agrees to pay compensation to the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics for damages caused to Soviet military units stationed on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic, to persons forming part of the Soviet troops as well as to members of the families of these persons as a result of the action or failure to act by Polish citizens -- to the value fixed by Polish courts on the basis of claims submitted in relation to those who have caused the damages.

ARTICLE 15

1. Separate agreements shall define the lines of communication, dates, order and terms of payment for the transit of Soviet troops and military supplies across the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic.

2. The provisions of this Agreement, and in particular the provisions concerning jurisdiction and responsibility for damages shall apply correspondingly to Soviet troops passing through the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic.

ARTICLE 16

Separate agreements shall regulate matters of the application of taxation, customs and currency regulations in force in Poland, as well as the application of regulations concerning the imports and exports in relation to the Soviet troops stationed on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic, persons forming part of these troops as well as members of their families.

ARTICLE 17

In order to deal efficiently with current problems linked to the stationing of Soviet troops in Poland, the Government of the Polish Peoples' Republic and the Government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics shall appoint their plenipotentiaries to deal with matters connected with the stay of Soviet troops in Poland.

ARTICLE 18

Under this Agreement: "a person forming part of the Soviet troops" shall be:

(a) a soldier of the Soviet Army.

(b) a civilian who is a Soviet citizen employed in the Soviet units in the Polish Peoples' Republic;

the "area where Soviet troops are stationed" is an area placed at the disposal of Soviet troops covering the place of stationing of military units including training grounds, firing ranges, firing grounds and other objectives used by these units.

ARTICLE 19

To settle problems arising in connection with the interpretation and implementation of this Agreement and the agreements provided for in this Agreement, a Polish-Soviet Mixed Commission is hereby appointed to which each of the Contracting Parties shall appoint three of its representatives. The Mixed Commission shall act on the basis of rules adopted by it. The seat of the Mixed Commission shall be in Warsaw. In cases when the Mixed Commission is unable to settle a question referred to it, this matter shall be settled through diplomatic channels in the shortest possible time.

ARTICLE 20

This Agreement is subject to ratification and shall come into force on the day ratification documents are exchanged and this shall take place in Moscow.

ARTICLE 21

This Agreement shall remain in force while Soviet troops are stationed on the territory of the Polish Peoples' Republic and may be amended with the agreement of the Contracting Parties.

This Agreement was drawn up in Warsaw on December 17, 1956, in two copies, each in Polish and in Russian and both texts have equal binding force.

In proof of this the Plenipotentiaries mentioned above have signed this Agreement and have affixed seals to it.

A. RAPACKI
M. SPYCHALSKI

D. T. SHEPILOV
G. K. ZHUKOV

APPENDIX B

TREATY BETWEEN THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY AND THE PEOPLES' REPUBLIC OF POLAND¹⁵⁵

The Federal Republic of Germany and the Peoples' Republic of Poland

CONSIDERING that more than 25 years have passed since the end of the Second World War, of which Poland became the first victim and which inflicted great suffering on the nations of Europe,

CONSCIOUS that in both countries a new generation has meanwhile grown up to whom a peaceful future should be secured,

DESIRING to establish durable foundations for peaceful coexistence and the development of normal and good relations between them,

ANXIOUS to strengthen peace and security in Europe,

AWARE that the inviolability of frontiers and respect for the frontiers and respect for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all States in Europe within their present frontiers are a basic condition for peace.

HAVE AGREED as follows:

ARTICLE I

(1) The Federal Republic of Germany and the Peoples' Republic of Poland state in mutual agreement that the existing boundary line the course of which is laid down in Chapter IX of the Decisions of the Potsdam Conference of 2 August 1945 as running from the Baltic Sea immediately west of Swinemunde, and thence along the Oder River to the confluence of the western Neisse River and along the western Neisse to the Czechoslovak frontier, shall constitute the western State frontier of the Peoples' Republic of Poland.

(2) They reaffirm the inviolability of their existing frontiers now and in the future and undertake to respect each other's territorial integrity without restriction.

¹⁵⁵ Reprinted with permission from Documentation Relating to the Federal Government's Policy of Detente (Bonn: Press and Information Office of the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, 1974, pp. 24-26.

(3) They declare that they have no territorial claims whatsoever against each other and that they will not assert such claims in the future.

ARTICLE II

(1) The Federal Republic of Germany and the Peoples' Republic of Poland shall in their mutual relations as well as in matters of ensuring European and international security be guided by the purposes and principles embodied in the Charter of the United Nations.

(2) Accordingly they shall, pursuant to Articles 1 and 2 of the Charter of the United Nations, settle all their disputes exclusively by peaceful means and refrain from any threat or use of force in matters affecting European and international security and in their mutual relations.

ARTICLE III

(1) The Federal Republic of Germany and the Peoples' Republic of Poland shall take further steps towards full normalization and a comprehensive development of their mutual relations of which the present Treaty shall form the solid foundation.

(2) They agree that a broadening of their co-operation in the sphere of economic, scientific, technological, cultural and other relations is in their mutual interest.

ARTICLE IV

The present Treaty shall not affect any bilateral or multi-lateral international arrangements previously concluded by either Contracting Party or concerning them.

ARTICLE V

The present Treaty is subject to ratification and shall enter into force on the date of exchange of the instruments of ratification which shall take place in Bonn.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Plenipotentiaries of the Contracting Parties have signed the present Treaty.

DONE at Warsaw on December 7, 1970 in two originals, each in German and Polish languages, both texts being equally authentic.

For the
Federal Republic
of Germany

Willy Brandt
Walter Scheel

For the
Peoples' Republic
of Poland

Jozef Cyrankiewicz
Stefan Jedrychowski

APPENDIX C

POLAND'S DEFENSE ESTABLISHMENT¹⁵⁶

GENERAL

Poland's Minister of Defense is the Commander-in-Chief of the armed forces, which he controls through the Ministry of Defense and the Polish General Staff. He is responsible to the National Defense Council and the Prime Minister. Vice Ministers of Defense are usually the chiefs of the General Staff, Main Political Directorate, Main Inspectorate of training, and Main Inspectorate of Territorial Defense.

Commanders of the Navy, Air Force (including air defense force), internal security forces, and frontier forces are directly under the Defense Minister. Ground forces are commanded by the Minister himself through the General Staff and the three military districts: These are: 1. Warsaw Military District, 2. Pomeranian Military District, 3. Silesian Military District.

Ultimate authority over the armed forces resides in the Politburo, which determines broader policies and fundamental strategy. Party influence is evident at all echelons of the armed forces. Political officers are in all units. About 15% of all military personnel and 80% of all officers are Party members.

¹⁵⁶Information on Poland's defense establishment is compiled from the following sources: The Military Balance 1976/1977 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1976); John Erickson, Soviet-Warsaw Pact Force Levels (Washington: U.S. Strategic Institute, 1976); and Defense Foreign Affairs Handbook (New York: Grant & Webb, 1977).

Under a status of forces agreement with the USSR, two Soviet divisions comprising the Northern Group of Forces and a Soviet tactical air army (the 37th), are stationed in the country. Soviet forces headquarters in Poland is in Legnica.

PERSONNEL

Wojciech Jaruzelski (Marshal), Minister of Defense and Commander-in-Chief, Armed Forces.

Ludwik Janczyszyn (Vice-Admiral), Navy Commander.

Henryk Pietraszkiewicz (Read-Admiral), Chief of Naval Staff.

Total Armed Forces: 293,000 (including 194,000 conscripts).

Reserves: 550,000

Para-Military: Territorial Defense Force -- 80,000
(some equipped with tanks), Citizens' Militia -- 350,000

Conscript Service: Army-18 months, Air Force & Navy -
2 years

DEFENSE PRODUCTION

Annual Military Expenditure: \$2.25-billion, (4.6% of GNP).

The Polish Army is equipped with Soviet-designed weapons, including the Makarov 9mm machine pistol. Although Soviet-designed, many of the weapons are believed to be manufactured in Poland. This includes the AK and AKM series of assault rifles and the 7.62mm RPK, RPD, PK/PKS, and PKT machine guns.

Small Arms and Armaments:

Fabryka Broni w. Radomiu, Radom. Products include 9mm VIS SZ/35 pistol, Karabin 7.62mm automatic rifle.

Fabryka Broni Warszawe, Warsaw. Products include Karabin WZ/43-52 7.62mm M-30 sub-machine gun.

Naval Production and Main Shipbuilders:

Oksywie ship-yards. Production includes the Obluze class large patrol craft.

Stocznia-Gdynia ship-yards. Production includes the Krogulec class and P-43 ocean minesweepers.

Gdansk ship-yards. General naval production including a new class of torpedo recovery vessel, the KII class.

Aerospace (Main Systems):

Polskie Zaklady Lotnicze, Warsaw. Products include PZL I04, TS II Iskra trainers, and An-2 transports.

Pantswowe Zaklady Lotnicze, Switnik. Products include SW-IW and SW-2 (Polish-developed) helicopters. Also Soviet Mi-2 and 2M helicopters.

PZL-Bielsko, Cieszynsla. Research and evelopment, and Flight Test enter.

Aerospace (Engines):

Polskie Zaklady Lotnicze, Warsaw. Products include S0-I/3 engine (for TS-II Iskra) and Isotov GTD 350 helicopter engine built under co-operative agreement with the USSR.

Polish Aviation, Warsaw. Products include Meteor I, 2K, and 3 series of research rockets.

MILITARY ORDER OF BATTLE

Polish Army: "Wojsko ladowe"

The Polish Peoples' Republic presently maintains the strongest army, after the Soviet Union, within the Warsaw Pact. It has a long-established and notable military tradition which extends not only to its ground forces, but also to the sea and the air. The tank divisions and six of the motorized-rifle divisions are in class 1 readiness. Polish airborne forces are somewhat smaller in size than their Soviet counterparts. The amphibious assault division is an elite force, well-trained and well-equipped.

Manpower: 204,000

Reserves: 400,000

15 Divisions (5 tank, 8 motor-rifle, 1 airborne, 1 amphibious assault)

4 Scud brigades

3 artillery brigades

5 AA artillery regiments

3 anti-tank regiments

Equipment:

Tanks: (est) 4124 (3,800 medium T54/55 and T-62, some older T-34, 300 PT-76 light, few dozen T-10 heavy)

APCs: Standard Soviet APCs are employed, including the newer BMP-76 PB, Czechoslovak-designed OT-64 "SKOT" wheeled APC with 14.5mm MG, the Hungarian-designed FUG (OT-65), and BRDM scout cars.

Artillery/Battlefield Missiles: The Polish Army uses the full range of Soviet artillery from 85 through 152mm guns, as well as multiple rocket launchers. Wire-guided anti-tank missiles include SAGGER, SNAPPER, SWATTER. FROG-7 and SCUD A/B tactical rocket and missile systems are also in Polish service. Airborne units use the ASU-57 and ASU-85 air-portable assault guns.

Air Defense Systems: In addition to the ZSU 23-4 and SZU 57-2 SP AA guns, Polisy forces are using the SA-7 and SA-9 missile systems (the latter mounted on BRDM vehicles).

Polish Air Force: "Polski lotnictwo wojskowe"

Poland has the largest Air Force among Warsaw Pact nations other than the Soviet Union.

Manpower: over 80,000

Reserves: 60,000

Combat Aircraft: 804

36 interceptor squadrons with 330 MIG-21 & 122 MIG-17/19.

15 fighter-ground attack squadrons with 190 MIG-17, 30 SU-7, and 10 SU-20.

1 light bomber squadron (4 regiments) equipped with
23 Il-28.

Transports: 45 An-12, An-2, An-26, Il-14, Il-18, and
Tu-134.

Helicopters: 150 Mi-2 gunships, Mi-4 and Mi-8.

240 SA-2 surface-to-air missiles at about 40 SAM sites.

Polish Navy: "Marynarka wojenna"

This largest non-Soviet naval force is well trained, equipped with a variety of naval vessels including destroyers, corvettes, submarines, FPBs, landing ships, and naval infantry (marines). The Polish Navy is also backed by a considerable ship-building capacity and a large merchant marine, as well as an important fishing fleet. There is a naval air arm, though this is administered by the Polish Air Force, even though the personnel wear naval uniform.

Manpower: 25,000 Reserves: 45,000

Destroyers: 2 Kotlin class with Goa missile
2 Skory class with static AA battery

Submarines: 6 Whiskey class

Corvettes: 2 Kronstadt class

Coastal Forces/Patrol Craft: 12 Osa class with Styx missiles
27 submarine chasers
21 large patrol craft
20 coastal patrol boats

Naval Air: 61 combat aircraft
4 fighter squadrons with MIG-15 & MIG-17
1 light bomber squadron with 10 Il-28
2 helicopter squadrons with Mi-1, Mi-2, & Mi-4

Amphibious Forces: 23 Polnocny class (6 tanks carried)

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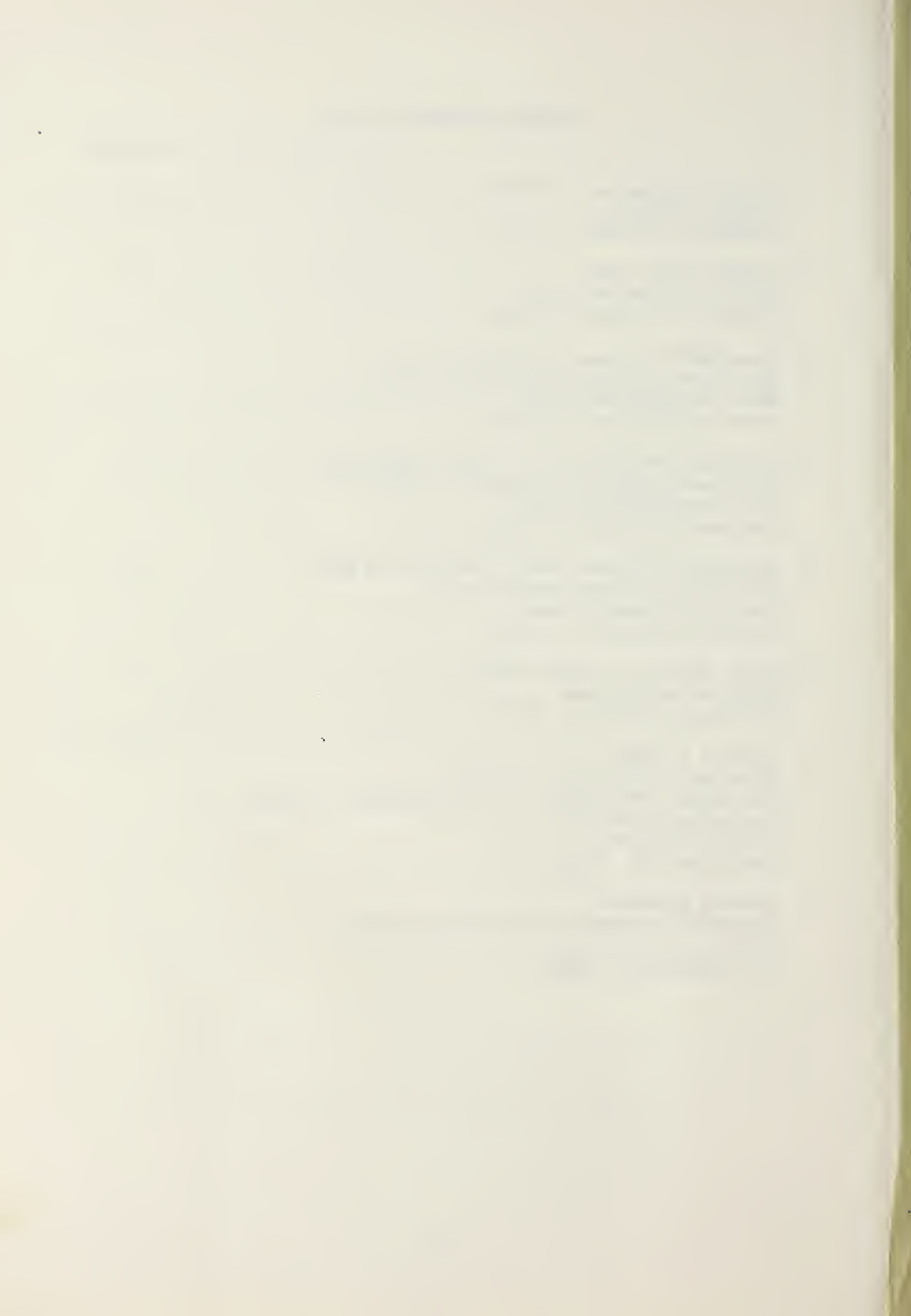
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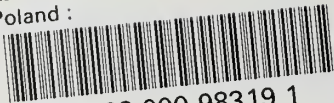
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